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STUART LIFE AND MANNERS

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BENJAMIN JONSON

FROM THE PAINTING BY GERARD HONTHORST IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

STUART LIFE AND MANNERS

BY

P. F. WILLIAM RYAN

AUTHOR OF "QUEEN ANNE AND HER COURT"

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS

METHUEN & CO. LTD.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

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First Published in 1912

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PREFACE

TO weave, as it were, a tapestry in words that would present something in the nature of a bird's-eye view of life and manners of all classes in the seventeenth century, has been the ideal striven after in these pages.

Abstract descriptions have as far as possible been avoided. But where details relative to dress, food, lodging, furniture, coinage, sports, education, travel and occupations had to be filled in, their employment was sometimes necessary. The general plan, however, has been to take the men and women of succeeding decades and show them in the setting in which they were central figures, that they may reveal in their lives the manners of their day.

During this epoch, the Tower, Westminster Hall, and Newgate itself were schools of Romance that made an appeal to the emotions as varied as though Fate were the Arch-playwright, and had fashioned every scene with perfect craft, and given to each actor, to each hero and heroine, to each fool and villain, the passions inimitable for their respective parts.

If the Lady Arabella's love-story were not history, with a real King as ogre of the piece, it would be a classic of imaginative art.

The Peers of the Realm, in solemn session, branded the lovely Frances Howard as a daughter of Cain. Around that theme no great artist has woven a work of fancy. It was not necessary. Art and Truth for once were leagued; and the simple records of her trial make up a drama that cannot be excelled.

The glittering comedy of the Spanish wooing, the poetical tragedy of the Purbeck scandal, the headlong fall of Strafford, the classic sequel of his Master's ruin were events never, perhaps, eclipsed in emotional interest in any age.

With the tragedy of Whitehall the poetry of life did not end. The metre only was changed to suit the spirit of stern melancholy that had taken possession of Merrie England. Under the iron rule of the Saints the playing-fields were silent. The theatres were deserted. The sword was red. The executioners knew no rest. . . . This hapless England was the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth!

But worse was to come. If Romance is made by contrast, golden days for Romance were at hand. Few eyes were dry as Charles rode through London to his ancient home. But those tears of joy and hope were only for a day. Swiftly joy and hope were killed. The new Lord of Whitehall was a regular Lord of Misrule.

In this new London the King's ladies were almost servants of the State. The notorious Blood was the King's friend. The King's pleasures were subsidised by the French treasury. Gaming, fighting and gallantry were the recreations of a fine

gentleman. Atrocious crimes, even homicide, went unpunished if the criminal was so happy as to enjoy the friendship of the great.

But if great criminals sometimes escaped, the meaner grade of scoundrel never did. For him there was as little mercy as for an honest man whose vindication would embarrass some miscreant in office. Public opinion knew no such shade of emotion as compassion for suffering. Tyburn and Tower Hill witnessed daily scenes to melt hearts of stone. But both were places of public recreation where gentle and simple went in search of entertainment—such entertainment as Death could provide.

Justice, Truth, Honour, had fled from the public gaze and lay in hiding, awaiting the advent of saner times. Grinding poverty was the lot of the poor. Plague laid waste the towns, sparing neither mansion nor hovel. Certain quarters of London were citadels of infamy into which no constable dared venture.

Bitter irony of it all! Eternal testimony to the vanity of public tears or public scorn! When the King who had never made one sacrifice in a worthy cause, when the King who had sold his country was no more, the crowd wept like children at the gates of his palace.

But perhaps their distress was inspired by fears for the future. It may well indeed have been so.

Soon Jeffreys was doing work in the West that would pass into folk-lore, and from generation to generation be told by the fireside, tales to frighten children and make the blood of their seniors run cold.

In those days the West was far away, and London hardly knew what was happening there. But soon the capital experienced some faint reflection of those distant scenes of anguish when Monmouth, the olden darling of Whitehall, run to earth in the undergrowth of the New Forest, brought hither to die, yielded up his life under circumstances that melted, for once, even the callous rabble of his day.

The narrative of a plain Englishman's misfortunes brings this volume to a close. It has been chosen for the reason that it vividly illustrates the chasm which divides the lot of the simple citizen of to-day from that of his peer in the seventeenth century. Henry Pitman, a West country doctor, was taken as a rebel after Sedgemoor and sold into slavery in the West Indies. But Providence smiled on his steadfast courage, on his intrepid defiance of tyranny, and at length poetical reparation was made him; for, when at last, having battled wind and seas and passed scatheless through the hands of lawless sea-rovers, he reached his home once more, the Stuarts had been cast down and he was free to live in peace in the land whence he had been delivered into bondage.

P. F. W. R.

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STUART LIFE AND MANNERS

CHAPTER I

THE LADY ARABELLA'S LOVE-STORY

WITHIN a castle whose time-worn towers swept for many a mile the broad acres of Yorkshire, a State prisoner languished in the spring of 1603.

The captive was a maiden of high degree, with wit to enhance such beauty as was hers, and a gracious, winsome manner, and, when they roused her, a bold and lively spirit that was the despair of her enemies.

Her portrait has come down from the hands of a great artist, and to-day, after three centuries, the magic of fancy loves to kindle in those wistful eyes the fire of life and warm the lips with the ruby of youth and health, ruby of the Blood Royal of ancient England. For the portrait is that of a Princess, who, endowed with every gift that merits happiness, was to the end a stranger to the delights of power or wealth, or home or love—the hapless Lady Arabella.

When, in March 1603, the end of Elizabeth's long reign was approaching, Cecil's every thought was bent upon securing the peaceful succession of the Scottish King. To Englishmen, James was a foreign prince, the ruler of a semi-barbarous kingdom, and rather than pay him court at Whitehall there were some amongst them who would gladly have seen Elizabeth's crown pass to the Lady Arabella.

Descended from a daughter of Henry VII., the Princess's right to the throne was a degree inferior in blood to that of James, but she was English, born and bred, with graces that might well prove more potent than armies with her countrymen, if once her banner were unfurled by some doughty queen-maker.

Arabella was not, however, an intriguer. Her blood alone gave occasion to Cecil for anxiety. To send her to the Tower for the crime of being a princess—a possible queen—would be the readiest way of creating for her a party and attracting to her popular sympathy. She was, therefore, placed in safe keeping behind the towers of Sherriff Hutton to await the decrees of Destiny.

At this time she was in her twenty-seventh year, eager only for tranquil happiness rather than covetous of Royal honours. Her great ancestry had thus far brought her little save disquiet. If only they would forget that she was sprung from a daughter of Henry VII.!

If only they would forget her altogether, and, throwing open the castle gates, let her go free to meet what luck the gods might send in her way, happy, at least, in the enjoyment of the same freedom that was the lot of any simple country-girl.

The famous Bess of Hardwick was Arabella's maternal grandmother. Bess, having buried her third husband, William Cavendish, married a fourth in the person of George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury. To Rufford there came as guests of the noble pair the Countess of Lennox and her young son, Edward Darnley, on their way to Scotland, where Edward's brother, Henry Darnley, had just been murdered, leaving Mary, Queen of Scots, once more a widow.

One of the young ladies at Rufford fell in love with Edward Darnley. Mistress Bess was not unkind, and her daughter, Elizabeth, and the Countess's son were married out of hand. But Queen Elizabeth, ever a foe to marriage, was vexed beyond measure at a union which linked the

Stuarts with the powerful English houses of Cavendish and Talbot. All concerned were sent to the Tower, and, in a little while, the baby, Arabella, entered the world under circumstances that foreshadowed her pitiable destiny.

During the long, spring days, when every morning the land shone greener, and the sky of clearer blue, the Princess was less distressed by the loneliness of Sherriff Hutton than many a seventeenth-century lady of high rank would have been. The stout heart, inherited from the redoubtable Bess, and from her Tudor ancestors, gave her fortitude, while her love of flower and field and woodland, and her delight in every gentle accomplishment, softened captivity with the best sweets of solitude.

That a princess of so many attractions should have reached the age of twenty-seven without being married was flattering evidence of her importance, flattery that afforded the lady but little satisfaction. One after another suitors had come forward for her hand, but there was in her case no masterful Bess to smooth the path of love and help the daughter to home and husband as the mother had been helped, despite the certain anger of the terrible old Queen. Sick at heart, the poor girl began to see her chances of a husband, at home or abroad, vanish gradually, the victim of her exalted birth, when suddenly a strange rumour reached the Court of Elizabeth. Gossip said that Arabella had fallen in love with a mere boy—William Seymour, younger son of the Earl of Hertford.

William Seymour, like Arabella, was of the Blood Royal, being also descended from Henry VII. The Seymours were junior in degree to both the Scottish King and Arabella, but the union by marriage of the two English branches of the Royal family would have doubled the claims of each. Seymour was only fifteen when his name was first coupled with his cousin's. If there were any grounds whatever for such gossip at this period they must have been slender indeed. Seymour was to earn fame as the man of one rash, one romantic enterprise for love of

the Lady Arabella. But the time was not yet. When at last his heart led him to dare all for his mistress, the hour had passed when their marriage could bring to either any political advantage, for Elizabeth was then long dead and James was secure on the throne.

When Queen Elizabeth lay dying at Richmond Palace the council gathered round her, and a drama was enacted in which the prisoner of Sherriff Hutton was deeply concerned, though the length of England divided her from the stage. The statesmen begged their Royal mistress, whose tongue was already mute, to make a sign at the name of him whom she would have as her successor.[1] Then they recited a list of claimants to the throne. Amongst others they named the father of William Seymour, whose mother, Catherine Grey, had died a victim of Elizabeth's tyranny. Hatred restored to Elizabeth for one swift moment the power of speech. "I will have no rascal's son in my seat," was her reply.

After that Arabella's name was not even mentioned. Not that it mattered. Cecil was the king-maker. He was Lord-Keeper of the Royal mantle. He would place it on whose shoulders he pleased.

When the drama of Richmond Palace was over, and its mighty tenant breathed no more, a lady stole from the chamber of death along the darksome corridors to a sequestered casement which overlooked ground without the Royal walls. It was dark, and though summer had come she may well have shivered with cold, for chill Death had just brushed past her, the chief of a revolution, uncrowning before her eyes a great Queen. That was the end of one world, the creation of a new one. And here she was hastening to conquer for herself a place in that new creation, for by the bier neither favours nor honours were to be obtained. Coming to the casement which she sought she peered out into the darkness for a glimpse of her brother, for it was he for whom she looked. He was slow in coming,

[1] *Account of the Death of Queen Elizabeth*, by Sir Robert Carey.

this doughty knight-errant, for he had much ado to escape from the palace.[1] The Lords of the Council had given orders that every exit should be closed and none allowed to depart without authority. But Sir Robert Carey, the hero of the enterprise, outwitted their lordships, and at length the lady espied him from her post above. And he her. To the misty figure below she threw a sapphire ring. Her knight seized the talisman which would make him the most welcome guest that ever drew rein at Holyrood. For looking upon it James of Scotland would know its message, would know that three kingdoms were his at last. The sapphire was His Majesty's own property, and the symbolism was of his own devising, for the ring had been entrusted by him to Carey's sister, with orders that it should be returned to him when Elizabeth ceased to breathe. And so in the grey of the early morning Sir Robert turned his horse's head from Richmond Palace on this first stage of a ride that ended only when, jaded and wounded from having fallen exhausted by the wayside, he drew rein at Holyrood and thundered at the gates for the King.

While the courtier was spurring to the north not a voice was raised for Arabella Stuart, and James, happy to find his new honours unchallenged, ordered the Princess to be conveyed from Sherriff Hutton to Wrest House in Bedfordshire, the seat of Henry, Earl of Kent.

On the 11th of May the new King entered London amidst salvoes of artillery, whilst apprentices threw their hats into the air, and fought like tigers for the privilege of huzzaing the King at close quarters.[2] Arabella was bidden to Court, and James was so impressed with the charm of his fair cousin that he thought of sending her again into the country to her books and her music. Cecil, however, knew that the way to make Arabella dangerous was to persecute her. He pleaded, therefore, that she

[1] *Account of the Death of Queen Elizabeth*, by Sir Robert Carey.
[2] *The True Narration of the Entertainment of His Royal Majesty.*

should be given liberty of a kind, as an inmate of the household of the Countess of Northampton at Sheen.

Northampton's loyalty to James had been proved at the risk of his head. Under the new Sovereign high office was assured him, and in a little while he became Lord-Keeper. At Sheen, Arabella would be thrown into the society of those who either themselves lent distinction to the age, or were in a position to associate with the men of transcendent genius who, with Shakespeare as their prince, were to be famous for ever in English story.

Something of a scholar, fond of music and poetry, a vivacious and agreeable companion, Arabella became a favourite in the brilliant society of Sheen, where every name was in some sense a landmark in history. In that splendid mansion there was one dainty person who played like a kitten around the feet of the great. This child's beauty and spirit delighted, we may suppose, the Princess as in years to come they were to ravish the hearts of the coxcombs of Whitehall. The girl was Frances Howard, the daughter of the Lord-Chamberlain Suffolk, and grand-niece of Northampton.

The King's children speedily fell in love with their cousin Arabella. Henry, Prince of Wales, was but a boy of nine years old, while his sister Elizabeth was only six, but they were not too young to be charmed by this kinswoman of theirs who won hearts so easily. James forgot his suspicions. In Arabella's eyes he read simplicity and truth, and, satisfied that he had nothing to fear from the most secret ambitions of her soul, he settled on her eight hundred pounds a year, and gave her a place at Court, entitling her to her diet from the palace kitchen, with ale in abundance from the palace buttery-bar for her servants. As a favourite maid-of-honour to the Queen, Arabella only exchanged one species of captivity for another. But at Whitehall one had little time to remember that one was not free.

To enjoy the splendid inheritance to which he had come from his own poverty-stricken land was now the chief

business of His Majesty. His days were spent in hunting. At night the Court feasted or gambled. Theatrical performances were frequently given. From Hallowmas Day 1604 to the following Shrove Tuesday thirteen plays were performed at Court, of which eight were Shakespeare's. But Shakespeare was only the popular idol whom the Court condescended to patronize. Ben Jonson was the poet of Whitehall. Masque after masque of his composition, each perfect in form according to the classical tradition, was performed at Court, and staged with a degree of magnificence that would seem to rival the theatrical achievements of the twentieth century. In the midst of the revels some whisper of treason reached the King; Raleigh, they said, was trying to set Arabella on the throne.

The maid-of-honour attended the trial merely as a spectator. She was already something of a philosopher. With eight hundred a year and her diet she had no use for a throne—no use indeed for her troublesome pedigree. Raleigh was disgraced, and the lady he would make a queen continued to enjoy Royal favour, and the run of the buttery, no small advantage to one whose eight hundred a year was inadequate to clothe her at a Court where the ladies, and indeed the gentlemen, lavished fortunes on dress.

Encouraged by the honours paid her at Court, suitors began to appear. The King of Poland wanted her for his Queen. A prince of the Empire penned her love-letters in Latin. These were not the only aspirants to her hand. But the King's cousin was not to be won. The King had so decreed it. And Arabella remained a maid. Month after month, year after year, the Princess followed the Court from place to place, a courtier for bread, and in the hours that were her own she pored over the books that were her chief consolation.

In jewels and robes worth one hundred thousand pounds Arabella took part in Jonson's " Masque of Beauty," with the Queen and other great ladies. That night marked,

in some sense, the zenith of her prosperity. The Court was at its gayest. The King had been King long enough to forget the bitter past, and yet was new enough to the throne of England to retain his zest in Fortune's lavish gifts. In all the perfection of mature womanhood Arabella took her place amongst belles, every one of whom might be mistress of some man's heart, all save herself. She was the forbidden fruit, not the less forbidden because, laden with jewels and arrayed in costliest vesture, she bravely smiled and played her part to the delight of the gallant company.

And then once again rumour coupled the name of the Lady Arabella with that of William Seymour, and rumour was this time truly inspired. For William was now indeed a man and in love with the only lady whom it would be a crime to wed.[1]

Seymour was now twenty-three but old beyond his years, "loving his book above all other exercise." The Princess was eleven years his senior. But if one is comely, vivacious and witty, eleven years do not count while one is young, and Arabella was still young.

One winter's morning a young gentleman walked boldly past the sentinels into the palace of Whitehall to where the King's cousin had her lodgings. In those days the King of England kept open house, and who listed might come there and rub shoulders with the courtiers and gape at their master. But even had the gates been closed, and bolts drawn, this flaxen-haired cavalier would have found the captain of the guard complacent, for it was young Seymour himself, and it was a good investment to be civil to a fellow who might live to fight another Bosworth.

The King of Poland and the others had sued in vain for Arabella's favour. But this youth had captured the prize under the very nose of the Sovereign. The morning was that of the 2nd of February 1610. It was a date graven for ever on the heart of Arabella. Seymour asked her to be

[1] Gardiner's *History of England*.

his wife and she said " Yes," and in saying it committed treason, and under the monarch's roof.

For a little time the lovers were happy making plans for the future and keeping secret tryst, but not for long. At Whitehall one could not guard a secret so well that some penetrating eye would not read it, and a princess may not come and go to meet a lover as freely as may a simpler maid. In a little time the treason was out and the unhappy pair were brought before the Privy Council to answer for their dread felony. There was but one avenue to pardon. It was to promise that they would not wed without the King's consent. And cowards, that they might once more enjoy freedom and its opportunities, they pledged their honour to let love wait upon the King's pleasure.

Arabella was once more free—a last brief taste of freedom. By July, Seymour had forgotten prudence, and Arabella by this time was so deeply in love that she would be happy even at the risk of losing eight hundred a year. Moreover, she was no longer a girl; she may well have thought that this was her last suitor, and, homeless and friendless as she was, not for all the kings in the world would she lose him. She would marry and brave the storm. When the step was irrevocable the King would surely relent!

It was while the Court was at Greenwich that they took their final resolution. Under the kindly shelter of night, Seymour, now a marked man, passed out of the city and made his way to the famous old palace where the maid-of-honour watched for him. At midnight he reached Greenwich and was admitted to the apartments of his lady-love. It was a bold adventure thus to beard the King in his own palace. But now it was too late for reflection. The clergyman was at hand. The prayer-book was open at the marriage service. The Princess's servants came forward to bear witness to the ceremony. And the lovers were man and wife.

The bridegroom hastened away with the dawn and the bride remained to play the part of maid in this masque of her own making. Greenwich no more than Whitehall could keep the secrets of a lover, and in a few days the whole Court knew that the most favoured of the Queen's ladies had been married at dead of night in her own rooms. At the Court of England they had not yet learned when to exorcise anger with laughter. In James's eyes she had committed a deadly sin, and those who had the courage to think otherwise should perforce plead for the poor bride as for a criminal instead of laughing in the face of the tyrant, who now ordered the unhappy lady into the custody of Sir Thomas Parry at Lambeth, while Seymour was sent to the Tower.

From day to day the young husband and his wife expected release, little doubting that the King's anger would be quickly dispelled. Arabella sent petition after petition to His Majesty, and her prayers for clemency were seconded by the Queen and the young Prince of Wales. James, however, was adamant to her pleading, and Parry's kindness alone softened the hardships of the Princess's separation from her husband. He treated her as a guest, rather than as a prisoner, and one of her servants was allowed to carry letters regularly down the river to the grim fortress where Seymour languished for his bride.

When at last the King issued orders concerning her, it was not for her release. On the 13th of March 1611 she was committed to the custody of William James, Bishop of Durham, who was ordered to take her to his See in the remote north; and distracted with woe the poor lady was carried from Lambeth to Highgate on the first stage of her long journey.[1] In this supreme trial all her fortitude deserted her, and she surrendered herself to the wildest paroxysms of grief. A stranger passing the cavalcade on that bright March morning, as it wended its way to the northern heights, might well have imagined that the fair

[1] Cooper's *Life of Lady Arabella Stuart.*

tenant of the coach was some hapless lady bereft of reason, whose friends were hurrying her from town to the merciful loneliness of the family manor. Strangers, and friends too, might think what they pleased. Arabella wept aloud, and in the wildest abandonment of despair bewailed the fate that had cursed her so unutterably. Such tempestuous excess of grief so exhausted her that some days passed before they dared drag her forth again on her cruel pilgrimage. When at last she had gathered a little strength they moved her by main force from Highgate to Barnet.

By the time she had reached Barnet she was reduced to so pitiful a state that she looked like dying of grief.

The Bishop of Durham was at this time close on seventy, and having had three wives himself, could hardly have shared the King's anger against a lady who had made only one tardy adventure in wedlock. Moreover, it looked as though tyranny would end in murder, for the Princess was dying by inches on his hands, dying of a malady that grew more malignant every rood that increased the distance between her and her husband.

Fearful of doing irreparable wrong by a too rigid obedience to the King, the Bishop appealed for fresh instructions.

Court physicians were sent to Barnet to report on Arabella's condition, and their verdict was in her favour. James therefore granted her a month's reprieve, and she was removed to the house of a Mr Conyers, who received from his unfortunate tenant a rental of twenty-two shillings a week. While at Barnet, Arabella scarcely left her room. The punishment imposed on her was trivial compared to that which from hour to hour she inflicted on herself, for incessantly she dwelt upon her banishment as though her mind could contain no other thought. To her the distance from Durham to the Tower of London was the whole length of the world. That journey once taken, never, she feared, would she retrace her steps, for it would be the duty of everyone who would please the King to forget her name.

Had James but seen the poor dishevelled maid-of-honour, or heard the lamentations with which she filled her abode, his heart would assuredly have been melted. But if a vision of her misery came to him in the hunting-field, he rode the harder until he had escaped the spectre. If her eyes red with weeping peered at him from the wine-cup, he drank the deeper, finding refuge from his accusing self in the tyrant's unfailing anodyne. The Prince of Wales, though a mere boy, was on the side of justice and freedom. To Arabella's prayers for mercy he added his own. But she had plumbed the profoundest depths of the King's generosity. By nature he was not a cruel man. But some demon of perversity ruled him in this matter. He who showered wealth and honours on the most worthless minions now drove a hard bargain about a woman's life and love. He would give her another month at Barnet if at the end of that time she would depart unresistingly for her exile!

In this cruel predicament a kinswoman came to the rescue. Lady Mary Shrewsbury tried to move the King through his chief favourite, Carr, Lord Rochester. But Carr would not waste compassion on one who could never requite him. Not a finger would he raise to save her from the abyss. And when the day of retribution came for him, and he too trembled by a yawning chasm, he begged for a helping hand, a pitying word, and begged in vain.

Aunt Mary was not baffled. What she could not accomplish by fair means she would accomplish by foul. She would rescue her niece by stratagem. The master-key that would open Arabella's prison should be of gold. The money was found by Lady Shrewsbury, and conveyed to Arabella, probably by her man-servant, Crompton. Her servants deeply pitied their unhappy mistress. Her miseries and her gold were a double bribe which they could not resist.

On Sunday, the 3rd of June, William Seymour's friend, William Rodney, took lodgings on the riverside not far

from the Tower. Hither was conveyed baggage that might be useful for a lady whose wardrobe had been mislaid. On Monday one of Rodney's servants appeared in company with one of Arabella's women and the baggage was taken to a boat.

That was an anxious Monday for Arabella. In the course of the afternoon her maid presented her with novel attire for the second act in the masque of which the first had been played in Greenwich Palace. There were a pair of hose, a man's doublet, a large peruke with flowing locks, a black hat and black cloak, russet boots with red tops, and last but not least a glittering rapier. Such was the raiment with which she was to adorn herself and as a gallant of the day ride out from Barnet to her love and liberty.[1]

The doublet and peruke she could accept with a light heart. The cavalier hat was neither unwomanly nor unlovely. But the spurred boots and hose were formidable equipment for a staid married lady who, plunged into the lowest depths of dejection by her misfortunes, had no spirits to impart a lighter side to her adventure. . . . A ship awaited her at the Nore! Seymour was packing up to quit the Tower! To her toilet therefore; and if she made it well, she might never again be driven to play the dandy!

A little later a young gentleman strutted forth. The rapier clapped on his thigh looked like business. But the rapier was the only vestige of boldness about that strange apparition. Arabella's disguise could indeed deceive only the blind. The lady immediately in charge of her was soothed with a lie which she may or may not have credited. Arabella told her that she was merely going to bid farewell to her husband. Her custodian was married herself and apparently could understand a bride being infatuated with her bridegroom, so she raised no hand to bar the way of this wonderful cavalier.[2]

[1] Lingard's *History*. [2] Bradley's *Life of Arabella Stuart*.

Horses were stationed about a mile and a half from the house. It was a long walk for a lady in ill-health hampered with two sets of raiment. When at last she reached the place trembling in every limb she did no credit to her martial vesture, for, rapier, spurs, cloak and all, the knight had to be lifted into the saddle.

On then to Blackwall tavern!

Oh! that weary ride, the last Arabella would ever take until by-and-by in the gloaming they would hasten with her dust to the Abbey.

It was only six o'clock when they rode up to the tavern at Blackwall. There she was lifted from her horse, but not by him for whom she had dared so much. For Seymour had not yet come.

For more than an hour they tarried at the tavern. But every moment was golden; and sad at heart she at length allowed herself to be led out by her attendants for the last stage of the dash to freedom.

She had now resumed female attire. Closely veiled and wearing a long mantle, she went to the riverside and there entered a boat with her woman, Mrs Bradshaw, her men following in another.

As they glided down towards the estuary she watched every barque that passed; no longer merely fearful of recapture but likewise torn with anxiety lest Seymour had failed her, and failing her had come by new and overwhelming misfortune.

They passed Woolwich and Gravesend and Tilbury. Still no sign of her husband.

By dawn they had reached the rendezvous where a French ship was to take them on board. But no ship could they descry, and now dispirited by Seymour's absence, and by the fatigue and anxiety of their long night on the river, they begged the master of a passing vessel to take them to Calais.

The master refused. But by-and-by, when the hue and cry was raised, he remembered having caught sight of a

LADY ARABELLA STUART

FROM AN ENGRAVING AFTER THE PAINTING BY VAN SOMER

"marvellous fair white hand" peeping from beneath a black cloak, where the fugitive lay huddled in the stem of the row-boat. The fair white hand was assuredly that for which Seymour was risking his life, and now it had betrayed both him and her, for the sailor was able to tell how he had seen the lady board a French vessel only a good mile from the place where a little while before they had hailed him.

Having boarded the French vessel Arabella still waited for Seymour during long despairing hours; and when at length they spread their sails for the coast of France, the priceless minutes had been too dearly mortgaged for the sake of him she loved. They sailed too late.

Seymour meanwhile had escaped from the Tower by following in the wake of a cart filled with faggots, and immediately taking to the river was rowed to Lee, where he arrived just in time to find that his bride had sailed without him. If Seymour cursed his luck he lived to repent his haste. For forty pounds he chartered a collier which laboured across the North Sea and landed him safely at Ostend. When he set foot upon the Continent the Lady Arabella was for ever beyond his reach. She had changed places with her husband. Her home was now in the Tower.

The Princess had tarried so long in the river that there was plenty of time for the authorities in London to apprise the Fleet of her flight. Sir William Monson, Admiral of the Narrow Seas, eager to please his Royal master, took up the pursuit in a light fishing-craft. He also sent out a flying pinnace, *The Adventure*, which pressed towards Calais while another sailed for Flanders.

Half-channel over *The Adventure* sighted the Princess's vessel. To the English challenge the French made no reply. Then followed a battle with the fighting all on one side. Volleys of musketry sped whistling over the waters to bar the progress of the fugitive, while a boat was lowered from *The Adventure* to seize the prize.

When the Englishmen stepped aboard the French

barque the Princess stood on deck ready for her inevitable fate. She had done her best. But who can fight against the gods! Without a word she surrendered. But where was Seymour! Without him the men of *The Adventure* would have won but half a victory. Swiftly the ship was searched, but the double prize was not for the Admiral of the Narrow Seas. They asked Arabella where he was but she knew as little as they did, even less, for while they were aware that the bird had flown, for all she knew he might still be in the Tower.

When Seymour landed at Ostend he despatched messengers along the coast to make inquiries for his lady. High and low they looked for tidings of her, but neither in fishing-hamlet nor in town was there anything to be learned of the bride. How could there be when she was fast-locked in the Tower, an object of pity to the whole island! Bootless pity, for not a sword was drawn as a lesson to the King that his people loved justice and liberty.

In a quaint ballad of the period called "A True Lover's Knot Untied," Arabella's story was painted in the homely colours that appeal to audiences found at fair and market. The ballad-singer of the day filled in some degree the place of the modern popular press, seizing the romantic and the picturesque in everyday life and enshrining them in doggerel verse, which the people purchased for a penny or in kind and sung round their firesides. In this way Arabella's misfortunes were made familiar to every household throughout the land. A few of the sentiments of "A True Lover's Knot Untied" may be quoted as a sample of the lament which in popular imagination ascended from her cell in the Tower:

> "Oh! would I had a milkmaid been,
> Or born to some such low degree!
> I might have wedded whom I liked,
> And no man would have hindered me."

Nor were greater folk indifferent to the fate of the hapless Princess. The Archduke Albert wrote from the

Netherlands begging His Majesty to pardon "so small a fault as a clandestine marriage."

For poor Arabella there was, however, to be no pardon. Denied the consolation of even being served by menials who had proved their fidelity, she sank into despair. Without a pretence at the forms of justice she was condemned to life-long captivity. And at Whitehall her very name was forgotten, or if remembered was spoken in a whisper, for it was better a helpless woman, innocent of wrong against any man, should eat out her heart behind prison walls than that a word should be spoken which would make the King feel some sting of remorse for his pitiless obstinacy.

Who could believe that death would be the penalty of marriage! Poor Arabella had never dreamt it could be so. Whitehall was only a little way off. Some gracious morning the King would think of her with pity, would think she had suffered enough, and would send a gentleman down the river with a message to the Lieutenant and she would be free once more. But the sun rose and the sun set, day after day, month in, month out, and the warders did not see a Royal barge approach with that King's messenger. The gaolers passed along the granite corridors rattling their keys, keys to liberty. But they never paused at her door and flung it open wide, bidding her go forth, that it was His Majesty's pleasure!

With nothing to hope for, nothing even to be sorry for, for she had done no wrong, the light of intellect grew dimmer, and tradition has it that in course of time the once brilliant maid-of-honour, the heroine of the masques of Whitehall, the admired of kings, had sunk into madness. In May 1613, Sir William Wade, Lieutenant of the Tower, was dismissed for his severity towards her. It was the custom of the age to punish the minion and spare the master, and so while Wade was made to suffer no voice was raised against the monarch who had so grimly shaped the course of his fair cousin's existence.

The Princess Elizabeth was married to the Prince

Palatine. The guns thundered forth a Royal salute. The cheers of the people came floating to the captive over the moat. People said "James will now be kind. Elizabeth loved Arabella who fondled her in childhood. She will remember her on this day of her happiness. The bride will obtain pardon for that other poor bride who had sworn her marriage vows only to lose her bridegroom." But the guns roared and the bells tolled joyfully, but not because James was merciful.

One faithful heart remained. Crompton, in November 1613, was discovered planning her escape, or rather her rescue, but who would help Crompton to rescue a helpless woman who once was very near to the throne of England but now stood on the brink of a maniac's grave? Crompton failed and they likewise found a place for him in the Tower.

And Seymour! He was in France watching and waiting for the happy chance that would reunite him to his wife. He watched and waited too long. The chance did not come, and the flaxen-haired student who had taken possession of the Princess's heart and soul did not know how to make one.

At last the day of emancipation dawned. They set her free by breaking her heart. On the 25th of September 1615 she escaped from King James to the King who is Justice. At night they carried her body out of the fortress. There were torches and men-at-arms at the Salute. Now she was the King's friend and they might honour her for she had had the grace to die. The funeral casket was laid in a Royal barge and, to the music of dipping oars, the funeral procession glided over the gleaming black satin of the waters past St Paul's, lost in the gloom of the sky, past the Savoy, and the palaces of the nobility, to Westminster Abbey. There they laid her in the tomb of a sister in misfortune, for her companion in the dreamless sleep is Mary of Scotland.

CHAPTER II

BLACK MAGIC AND A TRAGEDY OF THE TOWER

THE tennis-court at Whitehall was one day the scene of an encounter that might have been interpreted as an augury, if a spectator gifted with second sight had been there to read the signs. Two boys played on the green. One was the eldest son of the King, the other was of name and race familiar in the story of England. Henry, Prince of Wales, was angry, and so too was young Robert, Earl of Essex, son of Elizabeth's unfortunate favourite; and the Earl, of spirit no less bold than the Prince, gave the latter as good as he got and, in the end, a trifle more.

Some dispute had spoiled their game and roused their blood; and hot with wrath they bandied words.

"Son of a traitor!" cried Henry, and at that the Earl's wrath overflowed. He flew at the King's son and brought his racket down with a swing on the royal head. Instantly the blood gushed over Henry's brow, and while courtiers gathered round, or laughed in their sleeves, young Essex, full of fire, beheld with sullen satisfaction what he had done for his father's name.

They haled him before the King, and "the wisest fool in Europe" heard the cause.

"He, who struck you now, will be sure with more violent blows to strike your enemy in the time to come," [1] declared the Royal Oracle to his wounded son.

It was a shot into the dark mists of futurity that went wide indeed. When the time came for the fulfilment of this confident prophecy, the sword of Essex gave the lie to the King's word. Henry was not spared to see the folly

[1] *Life of Robert, Earl of Essex*, by R. Codrington.

of his father's prediction. But his rights were his brother's, and to him Essex might have paid the debt. But when the House of Stuart was tottering to its ruin, the hero of this boyish combat, the first of the Roundheads, was a Roundhead still.

In 1606 Essex entered into one of the boy-and-girl marriages then so usual in the families of the aristocracy. The bride was Frances Howard, daughter of the Earl and Countess of Suffolk, and that grand-niece of Northampton who as a little maid we had seen at play about Arabella's knees at Sheen.

Northampton was at this time verging on his seventieth year. By birth he was a Catholic, and at heart he was always attached to the ancient faith, but he was not a man who would permit his heart to wreck his fortune. His brother, the Duke of Norfolk, had lost his life and his estates for the cause of Mary of Scotland. The more subtle Northampton lived to profit by his brother's sacrifice; and when the son of Mary came to the throne honours were heaped upon him and his, and amongst these gifts of the gods was the hand of young Essex for his darling little kinswoman.

Immediately after the marriage Essex went abroad to complete his education by study and travel, while the girl was sent to Court, where her beauty and spirit and the prestige of her family speedily made her a ruling favourite.

Above all she became the favourite of the Prince of Wales. Frances fell in love with the young gentleman whom her husband had so sturdily chastised when they were boys, and Henry loved the Countess without apprehensions from the Earl's ready right hand.

The flame, in the case of the girl, soon exhausted itself. And the Prince retired, leaving the field in possession of one greater than himself, Robert Carr, his father's minion.

One night at a ball a cavalier picked up Lady Essex's glove and tendered it to the Prince.[1] It was doubtless

[1] *Life of Robert, Earl of Essex*, by R. Codrington.

a courtly way of finding the set of the wind. Henry declined the trophy with scorn.

"It has been stretched," he said, "by another."

And then all the Court knew that Prince Henry had been discarded for the handsome adventurer who prospered on the King's folly. In this game for a woman's favour the upstart had triumphed, and the blow once given him, it is said, by Henry was avenged, or so he may have thought, while still the scroll of the future was hidden from his eyes.

When in 1610 Essex returned to Court to claim his bride, the sweet dreams of happiness, that had come to him when far from England, were swiftly dispelled. While he had been dreaming his wife had escaped him, and never would they dwell in the enchanted castles that he had reared in fancy for their habitation.

He found his wife still a girl, but a girl hard of heart, who was too happy in a Court where Folly was Queen ever to grace with simple virtues the home of a man who, greater than an Earl, would be a simple English gentleman.

Had she merely forgotten Essex, a cavalier so bold, returned to England with all the glamour of a soldier fresh from the field, might have entered the lists as a suitor for his own wife and have won her back from all his rivals. But Frances was not free to love where she would. Henry, Prince of Wales, had helped to wean her thoughts from her absent husband. Robert Carr, Viscount Rochester, had weaned her from the Prince, had made the disengaged heart of the young bride his own, and when her husband entered her life once more she turned to his endearments a face of stone.

Rochester was a Scot who, like many another of his race, had followed King James south in quest of fortune. As a page to a gentleman of his own nation, young Carr first descended upon London. Then, after a little time, he went into France, the supreme school for him who would be the perfect courtier. The enterprising Scot learned,

quickly and well, the lessons that were to be taught in Paris, and thus equipped for his vocation he returned to Whitehall.

In the palace tilting-yard, where, in the midst of his nobles and their ladies, the King watched the tourney, a young man rode into the lists. Straight-limbed and flaxen-haired, with eyes of Celtic blue, Carr, for it was he, was handsome enough to send a thrill to many an impressionable heart. Most impressionable of all was the King's. At his Court there were always rank and fortune for an Adonis. Robert Carr had entered the arena to claim his share. In the midst of the dazzling pageantry the young Scot was thrown from his horse. The fall made the fellow a man, made him a nobleman, a dictator, what he pleased. James was attracted by the commotion and instantly fell in love with the elegant young cavalier in distress. And so it came to pass that on the 23rd of December 1607 the wandering Scot was dubbed a knight.

Prosperity ran for him a dazzling course. Four years later he was Viscount Rochester, with the Order of the Garter on his breast and Royal authority in his hands. All England was divided into two factions, his friends and his enemies. One of the latter, an angry Englishman, without the luck to fall or the wit to rise, taunted him in the doggerel lines:

> "In Scotland he was born and bred,
> And though a beggar must be fed."

But, beggar or no beggar, Rochester had the gifts that in all ages fascinate men and women. He was handsome, clever, amiable, perfectly bred in a sunny, debonair fashion, when it was his humour, or to his interest to be so. That was the whole measure of his genius, but it was enough in this New England created by the first Stuart King.

This then was the powerful rival who had stolen the affections of Lady Essex, but when her husband appeared on the scene to offer her his heart and home, only to be

repulsed, he had no idea that another stood between him and the treasure he still fondly regarded as his own.

The young lord took his wife away from Court to Chartley House, Staffordshire, where amongst his neighbours and tenantry, in the home of his ancestors, he hoped to win her confidence and her love. But though she dwelt so near him she was beyond him utterly, and before all the countryside the young Earl was made to look a fool, a bridegroom with an unwilling bride, a husband with a wife who was no wife at all.

A famous wizard of Lambeth, named Simon Forman, and a woman, named Mrs Turner, much older than Frances, but with as little scruple, were the great lady's associates in the prosecution of her love-affair with Rochester.

The Countess only followed the fashion in resorting to the Black Art for aid in her difficulties. In the early part of the seventeenth century belief in magic was well nigh universal. The country witch was generally some poor foolish old woman, half-crazed with age and infirmity. For her there was no mercy in England. The sorcerer and astrologer of the towns enjoyed, as a rule, better fortune. He was often a student whose knowledge might be employed in either a sinister or a benevolent fashion, according to the needs of his patrons. The astrologer who merely cast horoscopes, or read the future in the crystal, was a comparatively harmless person. But there were others who not only read the stars but dealt in poisons, and to their misdeeds might be traced many a black crime.

Forman's autobiography remains to tell the story of one of the most infamous of the tribe. Born at Quidhampton in Wiltshire, Simon picked up what education he could from a clergyman who had turned cobbler when Queen Mary restored Catholicism. Something of the cobbler's faith in leather he still retained when the accession of Elizabeth enabled him to resume his sacred calling,

for Master Forman, proving an obstinate pupil, was flogged into industry.

Later, Simon went to school, to a Canon of Salisbury Cathedral named Mintorne. Here the Spartan rule was continued. In winter Mintorne had no fire. He had, however, plenty of faggots. When cold he carried a bundle of these up into a loft and down again until he was heated by the exercise. Simon was heated in the same inexpensive way, the good canon encouraging him with the sage counsel that it was better to take exercise than to sit by the fire.

As an apprentice to a grocer and apothecary the future magician began the serious work of life when fourteen. He was now a glutton for study, a passion that disturbed the serenity of the grocer's home, and Simon was soon at daggers drawn with the drudge of the household, a Mary Roberts. At length hostility became open war. One day Simon, finding himself alone with Mary, shut the shop door, and seizing a wooden yard-measure proceeded to exact heavy reparation for past injuries. Mary proved game. She defended herself with her naked hands; but the yard-measure was a trusty flail, and the apprentice was for once a lusty workman. Mary, beaten to her knees, began " crying and roringe like a bulle," but Simon was determined to do thoroughly the business in hand. He belaboured her until, according to his own naïve confession, he had " made her black and blue all over and burst her head and hands."

Simon was not fashioned for a grocer, and to the regret of Mary, whose chastisement under the yard-measure had made her his fast friend, he left his master's house and tramped to Oxford. The University received him as a poor scholar, but the talents that might have raised him to high rank were his undoing. Abandoning the narrow road to honest fortune, or what passes as such, he took to astrology and fortune-telling, and, notwithstanding some unpleasant vicissitudes, he "thrived reasonable well."

To Forman resorted every man who sued in vain for the love of maid or matron, and maid or matron likewise turned to Lambeth when the desired cavalier tarried, or having come was hard of heart.

All the paraphernalia of the black art were to be found under his roof. If Romeo was blind to Juliet's charms, Forman had a philtre to open his eyes. If the philtre failed, or it might be that there was no chance of introducing it into the swain's wine, the sorcerer was not baffled. The Lord's Prayer could be written backwards and applied to an effigy of the stony-hearted lover.

These effigies in wax were indeed essential to the rites of necromancy as practised by Forman. He had figures of the kind made to represent Rochester and Frances. These waxen images reposed in each other's arms in the Temple of Magic at Lambeth, where the high priest of all this devilry pronounced over them his incantations. And while puppet clasped puppet their embraces were supposed to influence the lives of the persons they portrayed.

Forman's attendant demons possessed themselves with ease of the bodies and souls of Frances and Rochester, for black magic was aided by the magnetism of surpassing beauty in the girl, and in the man pleasing manners and a noble and winning presence.

Mrs Turner did far more than Forman to rob Essex of his wife, and to bring her to Westminster Hall there to be publicly branded as a murderess. Turner was a disreputable person notwithstanding that she enjoyed the friendship of so great an ornament of the Court as the beautiful Frances. She was in love with a Sir Arthur Mainwaring, a fellow of a roving fancy who was reduced to constancy, more or less, by the enchantments of Forman. A considerable family by the lady's fireside testified to the efficacy of his wondrous spells.

It may have been Mrs Turner who first dangled before the eyes of Frances the prospect of happiness bought by Forman's magic. She was, at all events, the go-between

in the early passages of love between Rochester and the young Countess. Hammersmith was at the time a pleasant little riverside village to which lovers made many a pilgrimage in the summer time. Either by accident or design, Mrs Turner had a house at Hammersmith, and here Rochester and his lady-love used to meet. The hostess, one may be sure, lost nothing through her hospitality, for Frances was ever ready to pay lavishly for her pleasures. This woman also had a house at Paternoster Row, a more convenient rendezvous than Hammersmith for lovers who would not be far from Whitehall. Mrs Turner was also established as the regular ambassadress of Frances to Dr Forman. The sorcerer showed himself as solicitous for the happiness of the go-between as for that of the Countess, and a waxen image of the gallant Mainwaring was obliged to pay assiduous court to a waxen Turner.

With the Earl's retreat to Chartley, the sweet delights of stolen meeting were at an end. The young Countess, in the loneliness of her husband's splendid home, became more and more dejected, a morose and brooding tigress, shunning her kind, with despair emblazoned on her snowy childish brow. From Chartley she corresponded with Forman. Her prayer was twofold. She begged philtres to kill her lord's love for her, and incantations to preserve to her Rochester's affection. Her letters remain to reveal the agonies of mind that made Chartley, and its quiet delights, a hell on earth. To Turner she wrote:

"I am not able to endure the miseries that are coming on for I cannot be happy as long as this man (her husband) liveth. Therefore pray for me for I have need; but I should be better if I had your company to ease my mind. . . . Let him (Forman) know this illness. If I can get this done you shall have as much money as you demand and this is fair play."

The Countess's notion of fair play was thus her own

sweet pleasure, and even the Almighty was transposed in her strange world to fill the place of patron and protector of so fair a sinner.

All the philtres and potions conveyed to Frances, and all the incantations and curses pronounced over the waxen figures at Lambeth, had no effect upon the Earl. Hence this complaint which the Countess wrote from Chartley:

"My lord is lusty and merry and drinketh with his men, and all the content he gives me is to abuse me and use me as doggedly as before. I think I shall never be happy in this world because he hinders my good and will ever. So remember, I beg for God's sake, and get me from this vile place."

To the dullest and most persevering wooer there comes a day when he will sue no longer to an idol of marble, and when the idol ceases to be the magnet of his existence the marble is apt to grow less chilly. It was so now. As Essex froze, Frances grew less morose, less the spoiled beauty, half-crazed for a sight of her conqueror. She became less eccentric, ceased to lock herself in her room and to take the air only at night, and was seen now and again in her lord's company. But Essex by this time had had enough of his Arcadia. He was weary of the lonely country house, and of the vain siege of that perverse young heart so cruelly lost to him. During the summer and autumn of 1610-11 they had been absent from Court. Essex now resolved to quit his solitude. He had wooed his wife in vain. He would woo no more. Let her have her way.

What with fortune-tellers and demons and lying and intrigue, Lady Essex was lost beyond redemption. To gratify her passion she would stop at nothing. Once more back in town, she was able to hold unrestrained communication with Forman. He invoked in her service the subtlest demons of his temple, while Turner superin-

tended the blasphemies, and acted as paymaster for an ever-generous mistress. But hell would have its jest at the expense of the demon-worshippers. Forman was cut off in the midst of his infamies, and now the fair Frances was without a mediator with the angels of darkness at the very time when she most needed their assistance; for steps were proceeding to procure for her a divorce, that Essex might cease to be master of her life and Rochester openly enjoy his fair empire.

By this time the intrigue had ceased to be a secret. The opponents of Northampton were dismayed at a love-affair which made Rochester an instrument of the powerful House of Howard. A passing flirtation might have been regarded with indifference; but this was no passing flirtation. On the contrary, it was common gossip that Lady Essex was going to get rid of her husband to marry her lover.

Northampton's enemies were immediately roused to action. The most daring of these was Sir Thomas Overbury, a young man of letters whose accomplishments greatly exceeded his fortune. Overbury was fit to rule a kingdom as kingdoms were then ruled, but he was only a great man's great man, and the great man was Rochester.

Overbury had measured himself against the men of his circle. He feared none amongst them, not even a Howard. In wit and scholarship he felt himself the match of any one of them, and given but half a chance he would outstrip them all. If he was Rochester's creature, Rochester was, likewise, in some sense, his. It was he who composed Carr's love-letters to Lady Essex, and he who kept tryst with Frances when the King's business detained the great man. With all his great gifts Overbury's manners lacked gentleness and tact. Once he was punished for laughing at the Queen. He had doubtless often laughed at the King, but it was nobody's business to tell James what to his vanity would seem incredible. Directly he heard of the project for a divorce Overbury's gorge rose. He threw

down the gauntlet to Frances, and Frances destroyed him.

Overbury's hopes of advancement lay in his own opinion in keeping the unlettered Scot dependent on his talents. A marriage with Frances would weaken his domination, and in the end shatter it. It would make his master the creature of the Howards, and the Howards had hangers-on and to spare without being troubled with a fellow like Overbury, who was happy only when patronising his patron. He applied himself, therefore, to separate the lovers, and once the woman had detected his game he should succeed or be ruined. War with her was, in grim truth, war to the death!

Overbury had the courage to warn the infatuated Scot against pursuing the intrigue. But Carr was past praying for. He would sacrifice all England, with King and crown, for the lovely girl, and to defame her was to drive him to frenzy. It is recorded that one night, in the gallery at Whitehall, the Countess's lover and her resolute enemy discussed the lady with so much bitterness that they parted sworn enemies. Overbury used all the privileges of his friendship to dissuade his patron from an attachment from which he augured disaster, and then throwing off all restraint, spoke of her as " a filthy woman." [1]

For that word Rochester could have killed him. But Overbury had not done. Referring to the projected divorce he went on:

" You will utterly ruin your honour and yourself. You shall never do it by my advice or consent."

" My own legs are straight and strong enough to bear me up," replied Rochester. " But in faith I will be even with you for this."

And thus, within earshot of the King and all the gay butterflies of the Court, these two who had been such close friends parted at daggers drawn.

Had Rochester been wise he would have locked this

[1] Codrington's *Life of Essex*.

episode within his breast from all the world, above all from his mistress. Exasperated, however, at the defection of his protégé, Rochester confided to Frances that their former friend had now to be reckoned amongst their enemies. The imprudence of the step was at once apparent. Frances offered a thousand pounds to Sir John Wood to take Overbury's life in a duel. She was, however, too reckless even for an age when life was held so cheaply, and Wood declined the bargain.

Shrewder minds than that of the beautiful Countess devised a means more cunning for effecting the ruin of Overbury. It was suddenly discovered that Great Britain needed his services for an embassy to France, or anywhere in fact that he was willing to betake himself. Overbury declined the office, saying he would leave his country for no preferment in the world. This was construed into contempt of the Royal authority, and he was hurried to the Tower.

Overbury's arrest was followed, almost immediately, by the appointment of commissioners to inquire into the causes of divorce adduced by the fair Frances. In modern parlance it would be for nullity. To Overbury it seemed that his arrest should be quickly terminated. He knew too much to be goaded to desperation! It was thus doubtless he argued with himself. But in Rochester's eyes he was already a dangerous, a desperate man, who was safest where the walls had no ears while he was fighting this battle for another man's wife. Lady Essex and her friend Turner took counsel as to providing Overbury with a vigilant keeper, and one, Richard Weston, a man far advanced in years, was chosen for the post. Sir Gervase Elvis, the Lieutenant of the Tower, was an instrument as pliable as the worthy Weston in the hands of Overbury's enemies. From Rochester and the Howards all good things came. Their will should be done.

Weston entered upon his duties with zest. The father and brother and nearest friends of the prisoner were

excluded from him, and had he been accused of the most heinous treason his confinement could not have been more rigorous. For nearly five months Overbury was in the hands of this martinet, months of suffering the more intense because the wretched man expected from day to day to be released. He was conscious of having done no wrong. He knew there was no charge upon which he could be brought to trial. He regarded himself as a courtier banished to the other end of London from the Court, a punishment that was only possible because of the honours to which he aspired. And yet as, day by day, he grew weaker and none of his kindred crossed the threshold of his prison, some foreboding of his doom must have been borne in upon him. He must have felt like a man tied hand and foot and gagged, with only a thin partition between him and liberty, but alas! powerless to make the slightest movement that could bring him relief. For had any man of power and influence raised Overbury's imprisonment in Parliament, or moved for his release, his gaolers could hardly have retained him in custody. But from the depths of the Tower, in seventeenth-century London, his voice could not reach the outer world. Parliament was very near to this gentleman being slowly murdered, but for all Parliament knew of what was going on in the Tower it might have been in another planet. He was in the hands of Weston and Elvis, of Turner and the fair Frances, and they held him fast until that audacious tongue of his was silenced for ever.

Overbury wrote to Rochester from time to time, begging of him to whisper to His Majesty a gracious word on his behalf. Rochester replied with fair promises. The King was not yet of a mind to make such kind intervention efficacious! A little later he would obtain freedom for his unfortunate friend!

Already Overbury was well advanced on the road to the freedom conferred by the grave. Poison obtained from one Franklin by Mrs Turner was being steadily ad-

ministered to him by Weston, while the Lieutenant of the Tower suspected what was afoot but feared to make instant declaration of all he knew. Overbury was aware to some extent that he was being drugged, his idea being that the potions would make him so ill that his enemies should perforce set him free.

There is no evidence to convict Rochester of a share in Overbury's murder. Testimony was given, but not corroborated, that he participated in the schemes of the conspirators. One of his letters to Overbury contained, it was said, a powder. "It will," quoth he, "make you more sick, but fear not. I will make this a means for your delivery, and for the recovery of your health."

Weston afterwards stated that the white powder was poison, that Overbury, never dreaming of such treachery, swallowed it, "that it wrought upon him most vehemently and his lanquishment increased." Poor Overbury, at death's door, blessed the sender who had discovered so efficacious a means for throwing open the gates of the Tower.

But the days rolled on, and though his sickness grew more violent, release seemed as far off as ever. At last the terrible fear dawned upon Overbury that Rochester was false. Still with his head, as it were, in the lion's jaws, some of the spirit that he had shown in his pampered days at Whitehall remained. He wrote to Rochester complaining that he had not yet found means to restore him to liberty, adding, "but I remember you said you would be even with me, and so you are indeed. But assure yourself, my lord, if you do not release but suffer me thus to die, my blood will be required at your hands."

While thus sturdily upbraiding the man who had but to speak the word to give him back to his family, Overbury can hardly have dreamt that his life was fast ebbing from him. But in his anger the spirit of prophecy had inspired his pen. The day came when his blood was indeed required at the great man's hands.

To Overbury's reproaches Rochester sent a soothing

reply. His letter was followed by a train of visitors who might be relied upon to distract the prisoner's thoughts without prying into matters that might embarrass those responsible for his terrible plight. The unhappy man was further cajoled by the appearance of solicitude for his comfort.

He was asked what dainties he desired for his table, and was so foolish as to order what pleased him. They came every one, tarts and jellies and wine, jellies that Weston would not taste were London famine-stricken.

The end came in September. Overbury had tried too long the patience of his murderers. They would suffer him to live no longer. Franklin's potions had disappointed his patrons, so Mrs Turner procured a deadly drug from "an apothecary's boy" for twenty pounds. Weston administered the dose to which the victim patiently submitted, though in his heart he must have feared that he was in the hands of assassins. But he was at their mercy and to trust them looked like policy. And so the lion gave up his life like a lamb. Of the last scene in the lonely cell we only know that the unfortunate man was seized with woful agony. But his last prayers, his reproaches, fell only on the granite walls of his prison, or on the granite hearts of his gaolers. If only he had accepted that embassy to France! But he had chosen to be proud. Accursed pride! And this was the end! The granite walls melted away, the time-worn ramparts were levelled with the earth. Overbury was dead; he was free.

Within a few hours judges pronounced the decree of divorce desired by the Countess, and the world suspected nothing of the tragedy that had sealed the lips of her most courageous and her most bitter enemy. The King himself had helped to reason away the objections of some of the judges to annulling the marriage, and on the 4th of November, less than two months afterwards, she was united in the Chapel Royal to her lover, promoted for this red-letter day to the Earldom of Somerset.

The beautiful Frances appeared at the altar with her hair hanging around her shoulders, as though she were a maid entering into wedlock from the seclusion of the schoolroom.[1]

Before the greatest men of the kingdom and their ladies the Lord Treasurer took the bride's lily-white hand for his own, and people, envying her beauty and the groom's good fortune, pitied poor Essex because he had been robbed to enrich the King's favourite with this wondrous jewel. But the jewel was not what it seemed. On the lily-white hand there was a stain, and the stain was red.

Feasts and masques celebrated the nuptials, but tracts of the times record scandalous stories of devices to which Frances resorted in order to have her marriage annulled, and from these we learn what the revellers said behind the backs of the distinguished couple in whose rejoicings they participated.

But murder will out. Overbury was dead and buried, but his spirit was not at rest. Unseen it walked abroad, filling men's minds with strange suspicions. But, ghost or no ghost, it was impossible that a crime in which so many rogues of the basest type had been associated should remain a secret. From the day of his death it was rumoured he was poisoned. That in itself was nothing unusual. Murder was a recognized institution in political and Court life, and as a matter of course, where there was the least shadow of excuse, or none at all, some malicious tongue was always ready to suggest foul play.

In the case of Overbury the enemies of the House of Howard, numerous and influential as they were, had everything to gain by imputing his untimely end to malevolent hands. But the rumour that he had been poisoned did not die as such rumours will, killed by the common-sense of the people. On the contrary, it grew stronger as time went on.

In the summer of 1614 the aged Earl of Northampton

[1] Lingard's *History*.

was stricken with his last illness. In the murder of Overbury he had had no share. Like Rochester he, doubtless, had not been sorry to see so reckless an enemy placed in durance, but, like Rochester, he probably considered that Overbury dead through foul play would be far more dangerous than Overbury alive and in safe custody.

But Overbury had been snatched away, and the proud old Earl lay down on his bed to die with the terrible accusation ringing in his ears that the lovely girl whom he had fondled in her babyhood, and was now the star of the English Court, was a bold and hardened murderess.

The tomb, however, sheltered him from the supreme shame that soon descended upon his house. Northampton was no more when, on the 1st of August 1615, the Earl of Somerset was arrested at Royston in presence of the King. The fall of the Earl was a masterpiece of insincerity in which James played a despicable part. Somerset protested against the insult.

"Nay, man," said the King, "if Coke sends for me I must go," and Somerset went.

"The de'il go with thee for I will never see thy face more," exclaimed James as his fallen favourite vanished.

The inquiry that followed brought to light in all its details the infamous story of Overbury's fate.

Turner, Elvis, Weston and Franklin were found guilty and sentenced to die. Innocent or guilty, the lives of commoners were cheap and the Courts had no compunction about their condemnation.

Somerset was put upon his trial. He protested his innocence repeatedly throughout the proceedings. If his hands were not stainless—and how could they be?—he averred they were not imbued with blood. But his peers did not believe in his protestations, and he was condemned.

It was not uncommon for great noblemen to have to answer for infamous crimes, but rare it was indeed for a lady of the Countess's rank, a lady of one of the great ruling families, to be arraigned as a common murderess.

When Frances appeared before the Lords of Parliament she was a broken woman. Many of them were her friends, many her enemies. Over all she had the power that belongs to exquisite loveliness, above all to loveliness in distress.

And here she was the very incarnation of Distress! She had not bargained for this day of wrath. She had always been successful, always pampered, and in playing for a terrible stake she really had not meant to gamble at all, for she had invoked devils and counted that they would make her secure. But the devils had failed her. God had struck down Forman, had shed His light upon the diabolical mysteries, had exacted some faint shadow of His own. And here was Frances, Lady Somerset, in the dust, never to rise again.

This court might show her mercy. But life should henceforth be utter damnation to a woman who, so proud, had thus been cast down into the lowest morass of the valley of humiliation. And only a little while before she was the haughty girl, the overbearing young tigress who had made the home of Essex at Chartley an inferno with her moods.

She who would give the law to heaven and earth though hell should be her mainstay, had no heart for the inquisition to which she was now reduced. There were tears in her eyes. She tried to hide her face. Tears and shame became her well.

Lately a daughter had been born to her. Motherhood had opened to her a new reservoir of emotions. Amidst grief and shame for herself the thought must have added to her agony that neither her own proud spirit nor all the legions of Satan could save her innocent babe from the consequences of the mother's infamy. The records of her country would make the story immortal. The little one would grow up to suffer as an accomplice in her mother's crime, a partner in her mother's shame; if good, to be pointed out as a gracious exception to the laws of heredity; if wicked, to be cited as her mother's child.

When the indictment had been read the prescribed question was put to her.

"Art thou guilty or not guilty of this felony and murder?" asked the Lord High Steward.

"Guilty!" replied the prisoner, making low obeisance.

A little later in the proceedings she declared:

"I could much aggravate but nothing extenuate my fault, I desire mercy and that the lords would be pleased to entreat for me to the King."

She spoke so humbly and tearfully that the Lord Steward could not hear. Her counsel explained that the lady was so touched with remorse and a sense of her fault that grief prevented her from expressing herself clearly; but what she desired to say was that she could not excuse herself, but begged for mercy.

Only one judgment was possible. She was sentenced to die.

Within a few days the Countess was pardoned, but the Earl refused a favour where as he averred justice had so grossly erred. He would be content with nothing less than a reversal of the judgment. In this the King would not oblige him, and, branded with the mark of Cain, Earl and Countess later quitted the Tower for the solitude of the country and the misery of companionship where the bond of union was scorn nurtured by the ashes of love.

The fate of the minor parties reflected the judicial spirit of the age. For a woman of family to suffer the humiliation of a public trial was deemed sufficient punishment for an infamous deed, but the Countess's instruments lost their lives. The most important of them, Sir Gervase Elvis, was executed on the 20th of November 1615. With his last breath he expressed his gratitude to the King that he should be permitted to die on Tower Hill rather than at Tyburn.

Elvis met his fate with the fortitude of a brave man, whose guilt possibly stopped short of the will to do down-

right murder. The dog-like submission with which he accepted his fate was typical of the age. He essayed during his last moments the part of preacher. He appeared at the foot of the scaffold in a black suit and jerkin with hanging sleeves, having a crimson satin cap on his head, and under that a white linen cap with a border, and over that a black hat with a broad riband. On either side stood a chaplain, while all around surged the crowd, out for entertainment, and held in check by the troops.

What followed would be comical were it not that it was the prelude to a man's death. Elvis went up the ladder four or five steps. It was, however, too upright for a tribune, so he descended, and by his instructions the angle was amended. Then he went up again six steps and addressed the assembled populace with the air of a man who had earned the right to pose as a teacher.

Espying one, Sir Maximilian Daly, near the gibbet, he directed his discourse to him. He reminded Sir Maximilian what jovial times they had had together, and how they had turned day into night, and night into day, gaming and roystering.

"I pray you," he concluded, "to leave it off and dishonour God no more in breaking His Sabbath, for He has always enough to punish us. You now see me who little thought thus to die."

Either moved to repentance by the appeal or too good-natured to appear obdurate at such a time, Sir Maximilian promised never to forget the warning, and added a word of grief for his ill-fated friend. "Look to it then," said Elvis, and turning his back upon the crowd submitted himself to the executioners.

And the little girl born before her mother's trial! She grew up lovely as her mother, but good as well as beautiful. Lord Russell, son of the Earl of Bedford, fell in love with her, and would marry none other but the murderess's fair daughter, and he kept his word and made her as happy as ineffaceable memories would let her be.

CHAPTER III

THE PRINCE OF WALES IN QUEST OF A BRIDE

WHILE the Court was at dinner one day at Whitehall two youths, rivals for the favour of King James, fell to quarrelling.

One, a fellow as handsome as one might find in all Europe, struck the other a blow. It was a deed at which the hearts of his friends sank low. On him they had built great hopes. And there he stood with flashing eyes, a prince to his finger-tips, if grace and beauty have a royalty of their own, doing his best to destroy them all. For raising his hand in anger in the Presence he might have lost it in the Tower. But he did not. The young courtier, who had failed so signally in the first elements of his trade, carried both hands with him to his grave—hands that overflowed with proofs of the royal bounty.[1]

His name was George Villiers, a young gentleman of Leicestershire, afterwards known to fame as the first Duke of Buckingham.

This episode was but an open expression of the warfare that raged at Court, and which divided the faction of those in power from those who coveted their places. George Villiers was as yet on the lowest rung of the ladder of preferment. But he possessed the talisman to certain success. He was supremely handsome in a Court where good looks were the passport to the highest success; in address affable, engaging and well-informed. So endowed he had but to open his arms to fortune.

It was in 1614 that George first appeared at Whitehall. He had frankly come to fill an empty purse, and to do it

[1] *Historical and Biographical Memoirs of George Villiers.*

he had but a fair face, a stout heart, and no more conscience than a courtier might carry with ease to his patrons. Like Somerset, he had been to Paris to give his breeding the final polish, and now returned to compete with the elder Adonis for the favour of a King who rewarded a winning smile and noble bearing with the highest dignities that could attend deeds of renown.[1]

Fate, in the comely guise of Frances, Lady Essex, was at the time hurrying Somerset into the abyss. But those that hated him did not know that the gods had already decreed his destruction. They could only reason, as intriguers will, that if Robert Carr had with ease fascinated the King, Villiers, with greater advantages of mind and person, might assuredly hope to supplant him in the affections of His Majesty.

It was as cup-bearer that Villiers entered the Royal service. His patrons proved to be superb judges of human nature. Scarcely had the newcomer entered upon the duties of his office than James was charmed.

But this King was not only impressionable, he was cunning. The slave of favourites, he tried to appear independent of them, and would have it thought that in yielding to his own weakness he was but humouring that of others. He would never, for this reason, admit to his service one with whom he was much pleased, save at the solicitation of the Queen. In this way he managed to gratify himself, and, at the same time, protect himself against the reproaches of his consort should she in the future find herself neglected while some elegant young upstart was pampered with viceregal power. The sage could always, under such circumstances, retort on Her Majesty that his protégé had been of her own choosing.

Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, was approached to obtain the Queen's intercession for Villiers. Anne, by this time, knew her husband and the stuff of which Royal favourites were made.

[1] Wilson's *Life and Reign of James I.* and Goodman's *Court of James I.*

LADY ESSEX, AFTERWARDS COUNTESS OF SOMERSET

FROM AN ENGRAVING AFTER THE PAINTING BY C. HOLL

"My lord," she said to Abbot, "you know not what you desire. If Villiers gain the Royal favour we shall all be sufferers. I shall not be spared more than others. The King will teach him to treat us all with pride and contempt." [1]

Nevertheless, Her Majesty would seem to have been easily won over, and lent her aid to the uprise of a new tyrant.

Somerset, however, was not dethroned without a struggle; and had he kept Overbury for his friend the victory might in the end have rested with him. Alone he was no match for the clique of great noblemen who now conspired to cast him down. He had not even the sense to disguise his antipathy to the handsome newcomer, antipathy that was shared by his hangers-on, and which led one day to the insult in the Royal presence which Villiers resented with a blow.

The cupbearer on duty was one of Somerset's partisans. The fellow, while attending on the King, upset a glass of wine over Villiers. Enraged by this wanton indignity George took no account of the consequences. In love, and war, and politics there never was a risk to daunt him, and while the Court stood aghast he exacted reparation in his own way.

The prosecution of the offender was Somerset's duty, and he did it with right good-will. But the King pardoned Villiers without giving any satisfaction to the gentleman he had cuffed, clemency which at once announced that a new star had risen in the firmament of Whitehall.

Promotion now came to him rapidly. In April 1615, when he had been less than a year at Court, he was knighted in the Queen's apartment with the Prince's rapier, and sworn one of the gentlemen of His Majesty's bedchamber.

Somerset would have sworn him as a Groom of the Chamber but the King insisted upon the higher dignity. There were limits, however, to James's firmness. Though

[1] Archbishop Abbot's *Narrative*.

tired of Somerset he desired that he should in a sense destroy himself rather than be destroyed. He imagined it possible to create a sort of twinship of power, in which the old and new favourites would share. Then when the new man was strong enough he could thrust aside his senior, and the King would enjoy all the relief of the tragedy without any of the anxiety of the chief actor.

According to Weldon, James employed Sir Humphrey May as mediator "to reconcile the jarrings between his rising and his falling favourites." [1]

It was a strange choice for a delicate mission, for if the King had desired to exasperate Somerset, Sir Humphrey's gifts were certain of success.

"My good lord," he said, waiting on Somerset, "Sir George Villiers will come to you to offer his services and desire to be your creature, and therefore refuse him not. Embrace him and your lordship will stand a great man though not the sole favourite."

It was a clear intimation to Somerset that his day of power was waning—a declaration of war, and the incensed Scot took up the challenge with spirit.

Within half an hour in came Villiers, and his words were almost an exact echo of Sir Humphrey's.

"My lord," he said, "I desire to be your servant and your creature and desire to take my Court preferment under your favour; and your lordship shall find me as faithful a servant unto you as ever did serve you."

In few words Somerset clinched the negotiations.

"I will none of your service," he said, "and you shall none of my favour. I will if I can break your neck, and of that be confident."

The Villiers clique doubtless heard of this reply with delight. To break so graceful a neck would have been the sin unpardonable in James's eyes, and one may be sure the threat was reported to His Majesty.

The triumph of Somerset's enemies was by this time

[1] Anthony Weldon's *The Court and Character of King James.*

assured. The Primate had evidently founded pious hopes upon the influence that George was destined to wield, and never rested until he had enlisted on his side the Queen's influence. The Archbishop's advice to the young man when he was fully established in favour was courteously received and easily forgotten, which was doubtless no more than His Grace hoped for. He admonished Villiers to pray for the King on his knees; to do good offices betwixt the King and Queen and other members of His Majesty's family. Above all he was to be the champion of truth without fear or favour.[1] But George's genius was cast in a different mould. He was not destined to pray for, or serve, the Royal family. They were to be his servants.

The disgrace of Somerset and his lady shortened by many a weary stage the road which Villiers would otherwise have had to travel. Never was the fall of a Prime Minister swifter or more complete than was Somerset's. In a day he passed for ever out of the life of the Court, and to the new idol all who would advance themselves should do homage. He was made Master of the Horse, and Lord Privy Seal, and to him the King referred everything, ignoring as was his wont older and wiser and more experienced ministers.

Villiers enjoyed his new prosperity with all a boy's zest, all a boy's recklessness and prodigality. Friends and relatives prospered as though a fairy Queen had ordered the world for their pleasure. One old writer records that one could not walk through the galleries of Whitehall without stumbling over the children of his kindred playing where this young scion of their house was Grand Vizier.

In August 1616 he was created Viscount Wadden, with a grant of land valued at forty thousand pounds, and less than a year later he became Earl of Buckingham. On the 1st of January 1618 the Earldom became a Marquisate.

[1] Abbot's *Narrative*.

George was not unmindful of the lady who had trained him at home and later maintained him at the French Court to fit him for this dazzling ascent. His mother was created Countess of Buckingham.

The letters that passed between James and Buckingham are perhaps unlike anything to be found in the correspondence of any other sovereign and subject.

To the King, Villiers was generally "Steiny," a nickname derived from St Stephen, who is always depicted with a "halo round his shining and dazzling countenance." At other times the favourite was "his dear child" and "gossip," His Majesty subscribing himself "his dear dad," and "gossip," and sometimes his dear "Stewart." Villiers, on his side, was familiar to insolence. If James loved him his love was not bought with flattery. No spoiled courtesan could be more petulant, more presumptuous, more brusque. It was, at least, true of him, that whatever he was, whatever he did, he was always himself, obtaining power by a certain insolent charm, an imperious and capricious audacity that became his princely air, rather than by the adulation and obsequiousness which meaner men employ in their climb to fortune.

Other titles and dignities were showered on the lucky Marquis, for whom the King now looked round for a bride of lineage worthy to share his grandeur, and lovely enough to keep in subjection one who no one's subject would be. Buckingham, however, chose for himself in his own way. A fair and well-dowered maid of the Court captivated his fancy. The girl was a daughter of the Earl of Rutland, but the favourite had little regard for either the greatness of her family or her honour, for he carried her off from her father's house to his lodgings at Whitehall.

The stout old Earl of Rutland would not suffer tamely so gross an outrage. He sent a message to Buckingham that he might choose between marrying the lady or retribution, for no greatness would, he vowed, protect him from the punishment he deserved.

The King regarded Rutland's grievance with sympathy. "Steiny's" wings should be clipped. He should marry the Earl's daughter, though she had been born and bred a Catholic, which might have been regarded as a disqualification in the bride of a Royal favourite. Buckingham was hardly the man to marry to please the King, and the Earl's wrist was hardly deft enough, or supple enough, steel to steel, to punish such a master of fence. It was therefore probably from motives of affection that he led the injured lady to the altar.

Buckingham was now the supreme power in the realm and nothing would do him but to lead the Prince of Wales to Madrid in quest of a bride. The project of a marriage between Charles and the Infanta Marguerite had been in the air for some time. In the hands of the Earl of Bristol the negotiations went slowly at the Escurial. It was not Bristol's fault. A thousand difficulties, some real enough, some merely due to racial prejudice, had to be overcome. The Prince was jealous of Buckingham. Buckingham had little reverence for the Prince. But suddenly Buckingham conceived an idea which made them fast friends. Why should not the Prince go to Madrid, see the Infanta for himself, love her if she was fair enough for love, and win her for himself as so handsome and accomplished a cavalier could not fail to do if only he dared to be the hero of so romantic an adventure!

In a moment of weakness the King yielded his consent to the plan. He quickly repented, however, and tried to escape from his folly. But there was no escape. Buckingham was a tyrant who would tolerate no vacillation, no argument. He might send his favourite to the Tower or give him his way. And he gave him his way.

The Courts of France and Spain were closely united by marriage. Louis XIII. had been married to the Infanta Marie Anne, known to history as "Anne of Austria," daughter of Philip III. of Spain. Her brother Philip, now Philip IV., had espoused a daughter of France, his

consort being Elizabeth, sister of Louis XIII. It was a marriage which Henri Quatre, father of Louis and Elizabeth, would never have approved, for Spain was still a mighty power, alliance with which might mean the eclipse of France, and to France the alliance was indeed ultimately disastrous, though in a way the reverse of what Henri would have feared, for far from Spain eclipsing France, Louis XIV. placed on its throne his grandson after wars which sowed in his kingdom the seeds of destruction.

On the 22nd of February 1623 the travellers arrived in Paris on their way south and were received at Court. There, as one of the performers in a masque, Charles saw Princess Henrietta Maria, whom Fate had destined to fill the place for which kings and statesmen had made the Infanta a candidate.

Henrietta was a dainty, winsome belle, but she was quite overshadowed by one of the most beautiful creatures of her age, a *petite* and graceful girl, with eyes of blue dancing with innocent delight. It was the Queen of France, the most joyous and artless of the beauties of the French Court. Charles may well have looked with rapture upon the fair young Queen. If Anne was so lovely, surely his own Marguerite, awaiting his coming in Madrid, would be no less enchanting. But meanwhile the Englishmen found Paris charming; and Paris was charmed with them. Even Henrietta, with the *naïveté* and daring of her fifteen years, said the Prince need not go so far as Madrid for a bride. So tempting was France, they tarried too long in its capital. Buckingham, with his ineffable disdain of all laws and of all obligations, dared to raise his eyes to the greatest lady at the Louvre. He loved the Queen.

The coming of the Prince to Madrid was hailed with delight by the Spanish Court, and Olivarez, the Prime Minister, declared that Charles deserved to have the Infanta thrown into his arms for engaging in so chivalrous an enterprise.

While in the Spanish capital, the crowning dignity of his career was conferred on Buckingham, for on the arrival of Lord Carlisle he received news of his promotion to a Dukedom. When the novelty of the visit had worn off, it was speedily evident, however, that the worst possible place for Charles to do his wooing was at the lady's home.

The Spaniards soon realized that rank was no index to the importance of their guests. Charles was the Prince. But Villiers was the person to be courted, to be pleased at whatever cost. The interests of Spain and of the Infanta were in the hands of Olivarez. He was attracted by the frank and manly bearing of the Prince of Wales. His countrymen were not in love with the English, but he was none the less sincere in his efforts to arrange terms. But who could transact business with this courtier who was greater than his master!

A hundred stories have been told to explain why Olivarez and Buckingham were soon at variance. It was said that the Englishman made love to the other's wife. But she was old and ugly. Gossip also said that the lady tried to convert him to Catholicism; that he encouraged her efforts to amuse himself, and that her disappointment at finding herself deceived led to a quarrel. But the difference in character between the two men was sufficient to explain their dislike of each other. One was a statesman, the other a splendid coxcomb. One would have died before saying or doing anything to diminish the dignity of his master's Crown. The other treated his Prince as an equal, perhaps as an inferior. This behaviour towards one who aspired to the hand of a Spanish Infanta amounted in the eyes of Olivarez to contempt of his Sovereign's family.

The terms required by Spain in this Royal love-affair were impossible. James might promise them but could not fulfil his promise. The terms required by England were equally impossible. To make disaster doubly cer-

tain Buckingham undertook to teach the Spaniards a lesson in the deference due to his august self.

One morning King Philip invited Charles to drive with him to a place a few miles from Madrid where he used to hunt. The Duke was not ready when the King arrived so the Royal party set off without him, his place being taken by the Earl of Bristol, while Olivarez remained behind to be His Grace's companion.

When Buckingham was ready they entered a coach and drove along gaily enough for they were perfect courtiers as well as deadly enemies.

Then it was mentioned that the Earl of Bristol had gone on with the King and Prince of Wales. Instantly Buckingham flew into a rage, heaping reproaches on Olivarez for having given the Earl of Bristol the place that belonged of right to him.

This spoiled child of fortune created a commotion of which even a King's wayward mistress might have been ashamed. Olivarez understood little or nothing of what Buckingham said. But his manner, his gestures, were easily intelligible. Moreover, he could hear Bristol's name; that and the other's anger probably gave him a cue to the secret of the Englishman's fury. Olivarez ordered one of his gentlemen to gallop forward to the King and tell him of the Duke's displeasure, not sorry perhaps to reveal his enemy in so unamiable a light. The King's coach halted and, with a degree of formality that one may laugh at across the centuries, a High Court was held on the roadside, His Majesty himself presiding, that swift justice might be done this injured grandee of Britain. Nor was a splendid audience wanting, for the courtiers dismounted and looked sedately on, unable to understand all that was going forward, but doubtless able to understand enough to marvel at the breeding of the arrogant islander who had spoiled a gay excursion.

The Earl of Bristol excused himself to the great man on the plea that he had merely obeyed the King's com-

mand. The Spanish Sovereign soothed as best he could this master of them all. And finally peace was established by King Philip's kinsman taking Buckingham's place with Olivarez, while Buckingham joined the King and Prince of Wales.

Before his son left for Spain, King James had been heard to lament that he would never see "Baby Charles" again. The father's apprehensions for the life of the Prince were not without foundation. Buckingham was a master of the art of making enemies, and Charles could not escape altogether from the risks of such companionship. Charles, on the other hand, was good-humoured and well-bred, making friends easily, but his very affability, joined with a certain imprudence, was almost as dangerous as Buckingham's arrogance.

Sir Richard Wynn, one of Charles's retinue, relates that the Prince and Buckingham rode out one day from Madrid, and halting at the village of St Augustine engaged in conversation at the inn with a couple of Spanish gentlemen, who saluted them with all courtesy. One of the Spaniards, desirous no doubt of making himself agreeable to the strangers, was glowing in his praise of the beauty of Englishwomen. He had been to London, and spoke of Lady Salisbury and Lady Windsor as the loveliest women he had ever seen. The Prince, not to be outdone in politeness, averred that the handsomest lady in the world was a Spaniard, the wife of the son of the Spanish Ambassador in England. "But," he added, "she has the most jealous coxcomb in the world as a husband, a very long-eared ass who does not deserve to be the master of such a beauty."

The Spaniards seemed little pleased with the compliment and the flow of conversation was suddenly checked. They begged leave, however, to inquire where the Englishmen lodged in Madrid, and their names.

"We are named Smith," replied the Prince. "We are brothers; and our lodgings are at the Earl of Bristol's."

Next morning two gentlemen were early at the door of the English Embassy in Madrid inquiring for "the Smiths" with whom they had scraped acquaintance at the village inn. "Smiths! Smiths!" The servants looked at one another. Nobody of the name lived there.

The Spaniards were persistent, and telling their story Bristol's servants identified "Smith" as the Prince of Wales and informed the visitors as to the true rank of their roadside acquaintance.

Charles, though at a loss to understand the honour of the visit, consented to receive them and the Spaniards now saluted "Smith" with the deference due to the Heir of England.

"I came," said one, "with the intention of letting you know that I am the husband to that lady whom you so commended by the way; and came with the intention of having right done me. But knowing who you are I am confident you have all this by relation and not by your own knowledge."

The Prince's sorrow at having so deeply wounded the feelings of a gentleman who had been at some pains to be courteous to him was unmistakable. He pleaded that he had but repeated idle gossip, and that he was glad to believe the contrary.

The Spaniard was relieved to meet with so much good sense for, though it might be a simple matter to exact satisfaction from a mere "Smith," he should perforce go without it if the Prince of Wales chose to stand by his words.

The second Spaniard, being less actively involved, was the first to see the humour of the situation. He put the Prince at his ease with a word of good-natured banter at his friend's expense, and "Smith," instead of being obliged to risk his life in a duel, parted with his wayside acquaintances with laughter and good wishes.[1]

[1] Wynn's *Narrative*.

If the negotiations did not prosper it was not the fault of Charles. His gallant bearing, his free and graceful manners, charmed Marguerite and her sister-in-law, Queen Elizabeth, though the rigid etiquette of the Spanish Court permitted little opportunity for informal intercourse between the Prince and these great ladies. Perhaps the latter were the first to realize that the Prince had come upon a sleeveless errand. Women's eyes and instincts are quick to detect changes of feeling. But the Infanta could say nothing. Her part consisted in being won when the diplomatists had done the wooing. Happier, however, than most ladies of her rank, she knew her Prince, and he was in truth a gallant knight, a legendary Prince Charming, whom any lady might be proud to remember as a suitor, though his consort she could never be.

Queen Elizabeth was certainly convinced that the proposed marriage would end in failure. At the theatre one evening she told Charles that she knew his engagement to the Infanta would be broken off.

" I wish," she said with her charming French audacity, " you would marry my sister Henrietta." [1]

The reply made by the Prince is not recorded. When, however, he was free to go a-wooing elsewhere, he remembered the good word so bravely and frankly spoken by one sister for another and turned his steps to where Henrietta awaited him.

Charles was quite capable of solving all difficulties by carrying off the Princess. But the Princess loved her home and her friends better than her suitor, and rigid as was Spanish etiquette this most discreet maid obeyed it cheerfully

Once at least Charles did essay to overthrow all obstacles and meet his mistress secretly. He was up betimes and with one of his gentlemen hastened to a delightful spot where the King had a pavilion, standing amid

[1] Strickland's *Life of Henrietta Maria.*

gardens, in which the Infanta delighted to walk and gather flowers on which the dew was still shining.

When the Prince came to the Casa de Campo the doors were opened to him, and Charles passed into the garden. It was empty. It was ravishing desolation. He had left his bed for nothing. Before him rose a high wall, and walls were ever raised to try the mettle of lovers. There was a door. But the door was double locked. So much the better. Had there been no locks or bars or high walls he had not crossed the Seas. Somehow he clambered to the top. Perhaps his companion lent him a helping hand. Perhaps he stood upon his gentleman's shoulders. At the other side of the wall was an orchard, and through the trees the Prince caught a glimpse of a bevy of ladies, and amongst them the Infanta.

It was a long way to the ground and there was neither helping hand nor loyal shoulders to ease his descent. But Charles never hesitated. It was for this he was in Spain, to make love in an old garden, with the odour of blossoms and the odour of flowers breathing enchantment around him.

Of the ladies, the first to cast eyes upon him was the Infanta. That was a misfortune. She shrieked and, as in duty bound, ran away without giving the Prince a moment in which to profit by his daring.

As it was, while the ladies fled to covert the Prince dare not pursue his adventure further, for the aged nobleman, who was the Infanta's guardian, recognising the trespasser, fell on his knees and begged him to retire, pleading that he dare not admit him under such circumstances to his mistress's company save at the hazard of his head.

The Prince's impetuosity and devotion to the Infanta must have filled her brother with regret that everything was wanting to make the union possible—save love, and that counted for least of all. So far as Buckingham was concerned, the day on which he had quarrelled with

Olivarez had ended everything. Henceforth he was resolved to humiliate his enemy at all costs.

The dispensation arrived in Madrid from Rome. It contained a proviso that Philip should take measures to secure the performance of promises made on behalf of James's Catholic subjects. This proviso gave rise to interminable negotiations, in which it was plain that each side doubted the sincerity of the other. Pope Gregory XV. died and a new dispensation was thought necessary. Here was a further cause for delay, while all the time Buckingham and Olivarez were quarrelling. In this atmosphere of doubt and suspicion and contention, love died, and Charles, now heartily sorry for having undertaken his romantic quest, thought only of how he could make a graceful retreat.

Philip wished Charles to precede his bride to England, there to give effect to the promises of relief for the persecuted Catholics. The English pretended to fear that after the Prince's departure his bride would enter a convent. The Infanta was frankly amused. "I must confess," she said, "that not in all my life had I any mind to be a nun and hardly think I shall be one merely to avoid the Prince of Wales."

The Infanta's words were fulfilled. She was not destined for a nunnery. What England lost Austria gained, for she became the consort of the Emperor.

A treaty of marriage was entered into which Charles had no intention of fulfilling, and the Infanta assumed the title and dignity of a Princess of England. After the solemn oaths which confirmed the Treaty, Philip and Charles parted like brothers, Buckingham and Olivarez with insults.

"To the King and Queen and Princess," said Buckingham, addressing Olivarez, "I shall always prove myself a humble servant; to you never."

"I am honoured by the compliment," was the Spaniard's deadly repartee.

The 9th of December 1623 was eventually fixed for the wedding by proxy, and on the 12th of September, after this strange wooing had lasted eight months, Prince Charles attended to take leave of the lady whom all Europe now regarded as a Princess of England.

The Spanish King, with his last words, protested his desire for a closer union with a Prince who had so frankly entrusted his life and liberty to his keeping. Then, attended by a splendid train of Spanish cavaliers, the Prince and his suite travelled to the coast. At St Andera Charles feasted the Spanish on board his ship.

He toasted their Master. They toasted him. And that was the end of the Spanish wooing.

On the 25th of October the lookout at Plymouth descried the Prince of Wales's ship, and soon flying couriers had carried the great news to London to the old King, whose hold on life was fast declining. For long he had been well content that Spain should keep her Infanta, and that the devil should take Buckingham, if only " Baby Charles " should once more tread the soil of England. And lo! he had come. . . .

In Spain, Court and people were busy preparing for the great day on which their young lady should cease to be theirs and become the prize of their ancient enemies.

On the mountain-sides the faggots were piled that would blaze by-and-by in rejoicing. The bells were ready to crash out their music, the artillery were ready to fire their salvoes. In the Escurial the gifts sent from Vienna and Paris, from Milan and Rome and Florence, and many another city, were the admiration, the envy, of the ladies of Madrid.

Only three days until the nuptials! And then as morning dawned a courier, travel-stained and weary, spurred over the countryside to where the rising sun turned to gold the palaces and churches of Madrid. This man was no Spanish cavalier, but one whose air and trappings

bespoke the foreigner—an Englishman. And his goal was the British Embassy.

The Earl of Bristol received this courier and read his King's command. The marriage was not to proceed until Philip would pledge himself to take up arms in the cause of his son-in-law, the Prince Palatine.

Philip received the blow with dignity. The demand dishonoured himself and his sister. The marriage treaty was torn to ribbons by such a stipulation. The faggots might be scattered to the winds. The wedding-gifts might be returned. England would not have a Spanish Queen.

CHAPTER IV

BUCKINGHAM LOVES THE QUEEN OF FRANCE

ANNE OF AUSTRIA was only eleven years old when she was betrothed in Madrid by proxy to Louis XIII., then a boy of twelve. The little girl's message to her unknown lord was the very one to captivate His Majesty had he been worthy of her.

"Give His Majesty assurance," said the child-bride to the French Ambassador, "that I am very impatient to be with him."

"Oh, madam!" cried the staid governess, shocked out of her composure, "what will the King of France think when he is informed that you are in such a hurry to be married?"

"Have you not always taught me to speak the truth, madam?" said the child, proudly. "I have spoken and shall not retract."[1]

Here was the very maiden to grace the throne of a gallant nation. Left to themselves, the youthful pair would have been the happiest lovers in the land, while the lovely girl would in time, in virtue of her superior intelligence, have ruled King and country and ruled them well.

But not thus smoothly and happy was Louis to enjoy with his charming consort his inheritance. The Queen-mother, Marie de Medici, ordained it otherwise. To keep her son in leading-strings was her policy, and King and Queen were subjected to the discipline of children.

The young couple were at first to be no more to each other than brother and sister. Anne was therefore without any protection from her French ladies on the one hand,

[1] *Life of Anne of Austria*, by Martha Freer.

from the Spanish duennas on the other. The French viewed her dress and manners with contempt. The Spanish members of her suite shuddered at the luxury, the extravagance, the variety of the French modes. Poor Anne could not please both. Policy, and doubtless inclination, made her favour the fashions of Paris at the risk of offending her compatriots, whose chagrin had to be alleviated by some concession to Spanish pride, which in turn wounded native sentiment.

With Paris fashions Anne put on the manners of the Louvre. Naturally vivacious, she soon emancipated herself from the stately etiquette of the Escurial, and learned to shine in the tournament of wit and mockery and coquetry that was the breath of life in her new home, where nobody was dull save her husband. He was not only dull, but shy and petulant, without any capacity for leadership, when leadership would have merely consisted in capturing his Queen from an army of courtiers and courtesans, watchful duennas and utterly selfish intriguers, and making her his wife and Queen of the realm in very truth.

Too late for Anne's happiness new forces made a change, new men arrived. Marie's favourite Concini was slain, and Marie fell to rise no more. Then in a little time the shadow of Richelieu fell across the stage. The King admired him but feared to trust him. But still the shadow was there, and then one day the call went forth and he glided on to the scene. He came and conquered King and Queen and nobles. The predestined one, there was no opposing him in his birthright. He was supreme.

It was to the land where the great Cardinal ruled that England now turned in search of a wife for the Prince of Wales—the wife whom Elizabeth of Spain had indicated on that never-to-be-forgotten night when she had whispered into the ear of Charles in the theatre at Madrid the name of her young sister.

Buckingham favoured the idea of continuing in Paris the adventures begun in the Spanish capital. He had,

as we know, seen Anne on his way south, and had admired her, for who could fail to do so? And now, madly indifferent to her honour or her happiness, he was to make a bold bid for her affections, careless that in doing so he was preparing for her an abyss as dark as had ever swallowed up the queen of a great kingdom.

He had humiliated Spain before all Europe. He had made Marguerite a laughing-stock in every Court. But her fate was kind compared with that designed by him for her fair sister.

The man chosen to open the negotiations in Paris was Lord Holland. He was a splendid coxcomb—handsome, rich and gay, a great favourite of the King's favourite, with diplomacy enough to keep in the good graces of both. It was said that His Majesty had lavished on him in a few years one hundred and fifty thousand pounds, while, as a still more magnificent proof of Royal favour, he gave him in marriage one of the richest heiresses in England, Isabella Cope, who brought him the Manor of Kensington.

This bejewelled dandy was not perhaps an accomplished ambassador when pitted against such a master as Richelieu, but he could dance and turn a jest and take a hand with spirit in the game of the hour. Moreover, he knew the Louvre well. He had been there as an envoy a few years previously. And his very particular friend was the mistress of the Queen's household, Madame de Chevreuse. To be her favourite was to be the darling of the loveliest and gayest of the belles of the Court, for she was the sprightliest of them all, the goddess whom in their hearts they envied and would imitate.

This sparkling jewel, inimitable in the childish buoyancy of her manners, oppressed with no sense of dignity, and perhaps as little of duty, was a daughter of the princely house of Rohan. Gifted with extraordinary beauty and wit, Marie de Rohan when only seventeen captivated the Duke de Luynes, the Villiers of the French Court, whose only title to the wealth, the honours and the high rank

he enjoyed was his handsome face and gentle, winning manners. Marie doubtless cared little that her lover was a parvenu. He was the favourite of the King! And a favourite has no gaps in his pedigree! Yet something was apparently wanting, for the King, to make sure of his minion's happiness, promised that if Marie would give her hand to the Duke she would be rewarded with the post of Mistress of the Queen's household. And at the price the bargain was struck.

At this time Anne of Austria had not imbibed the cynical spirit of the Louvre. Marie de Rohan's levity shocked her. And the appointment of a mere school-girl as chief lady of her household caused a quarrel between her and the King. But this Duchess, so young and gay and irresponsible, was irresistible. In the midst of intriguers laughter was her profession. Her policy, to be happy. By degrees Marie won her way to her mistress's heart and became the Queen's trusted friend.

In a little while the splendid Luynes, now Constable of France, incurred the jealousy of Louis. But " Le Roy Luynes," as his master called him in anger, was not born to taste of the cup that sooner or later embitters the lot of every Royal favourite. He was struck down with fever and in a few hours was dead. The following year his lovely widow wedded a man of lineage as illustrious as her own, the Duke de Chevreuse, an indolent courtier who gave his wife his rank and name without imposing on her any of the trammels of matrimony.

The friendship of Madame de Chevreuse for Lord Holland secured for the English envoy a cordial welcome in the Queen's circle. Holland, like a faithful henchman, doubtless painted Buckingham's magnificence in the most appealing colours for the edification of Queen Anne and her ladies. His Grace's adventures in Madrid were of course well known at the Louvre through the gossip of travellers as well as through private letters that passed between the two Courts, and the coming of an Emperor

could not have excited more curiosity than did his when it became known that he was to escort Henrietta Maria to her new home.

But before that day came King James was no more. And though Henrietta was espoused to the Prince of Wales it was to the King of England she was married.

Never had Paris seen festivities more splendid than these which marked the wedding by proxy of the Princess.

In Paris they said Louis Treize should leave the Louvre to make room for Buckingham and his suite. There were seven hundred people in his train. He had his own chariots, his own horses, his musicians and his watermen. "In his wardrobe he had twenty-seven suits of clothes embroidered and trimmed with silk and silver plushes." "Two suits above all dazzled the French. One was of satin-velvet with cloak to match, set all over with diamonds valued at ten thousand pounds. Another suit was of purple satin embroidered with fine pearls. He had, moreover, a feather clasped with huge diamonds; a sword girdle, hat band and spurs, all studded with diamonds."

Parisians often laughed in those days at the vagaries in dress of the islanders. But in Villiers they found no point for laughter. As he bowed before Queen Anne, when he came to the palace to pay his first visit of State, he was scrutinized by princes and nobles the most brilliant, the most gifted, the wealthiest in Europe. But Villiers carried himself with the ease and grace of one who was a spectator rather than the target of every glance. Even in this most polished Court in Europe there was none more handsome, none more brilliant than this young gentleman of Leicestershire who had begun his career as a cup-bearer, and now had the air a Prince of the Blood might envy.

When the day of the wedding came the Duke of Chevreuse, dressed in a black robe lined with cloth of gold, and sparkling with diamonds, acted as proxy for King Charles. The English Ambassador, clad in beaten silver, supported the representatives of the Sovereign.

Owing to the difference of religion the marriage service was read on a platform erected in front of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame. Standing under a gorgeous canopy the King of France gave his sister to the deputy of the English King. Then a procession was formed and the young Queen of England, led by Chevreuse and taking precedence of King Louis, entered the Cathedral for the nuptial mass.

The man chosen to escort Henrietta to England had by this time fallen headlong in love with Anne of Austria; or if not in love, half crazy with vanity he resolved to win her heart for the mere pleasure of making a Queen his slave. Buckingham was not tardy in the pursuit to which he had now set himself. It was part of his profession to be able to express the tenderest sentiments in the fewest words, or indeed without any words at all. He was not a finished gallant who could not convey the warmth of his passion whilst kissing the tips of his lady's fingers or the hem of her garment, or in the brief instant in which her eyes looked into his, and Buckingham was a finished gallant, if one there was in the England of his day.

For eight days Paris took the young English Duke to its heart. Only eight days, but every day was a year to Buckingham, a lifetime of new and intoxicating emotions to Anne.

The young Queen, scorned by Marie de Medici, regarded coldly by her husband, now had at her feet one greater than Louis or Marie, greater than his Royal Master, for did not this fellow clothed in satin and sparkling with diamonds rule England![1] They had grudged her the admiration of her husband; they had grudged her his love and confidence. French nobles who had dared to worship the matchless young beauty had been banished. But Buckingham was careless whom he pleased or displeased so that she whose smiles he coveted smiled upon him.

Louis looked on moodily while Paris went mad about the *débonnaire* Englishman who had learned his trade

[1] *The Mischiefs occasioned by George Villiers.*

amongst them and now returned to give a lesson to his old masters. Paris did its best to set Buckingham mad, and well did it succeed. At the Hôtel de Chevreuse he was the guest of the Queen's favourite lady. All that was noble and gay and brilliant paid court to him at the Duchess of Guise's, where banquets and masques made intoxicating revelry. The *salons* of the Luxembourg, where Marie de Medici reigned, were thrown open to him. At Madame de Sablé's he met the men who had won laurels in literature. Condé, the new constable, the Duke of Chaulnes, and many another gathered in their palaces the fairest women and brightest ornaments of French chivalry to honour the visitor.

And then on the 2nd of June the whirl of dissipation ended with a dazzling procession through Paris, and all the city had turned out to see the English Duke carry the young Queen of England from her old home along the first stage of her journey to her new kingdom.

King Louis and Richelieu were not of the cavalcade. The King was never happy in a pageant. This old-young man stepped aside to make way for his enemy, his reckless rival. His Majesty left Paris with Richelieu for Fontainebleau, leaving the Queen-mother and his consort to accompany his sister to Calais.

As that gallant company rode along towards the coast Buckingham, wiser in his generation than Anne's husband, pressed on with the siege of his lady's heart.

Fortune favours the brave, and the devil his own. At Amiens Marie de Medici fell ill, and the Court halted for a few days while Her Majesty rested. Marie was lodged in the Bishop's palace. Anne was established in a large house on the banks of the Somme.[1]

While Amiens was honoured with the presence of three Queens, the Duke of Chaulnes seized the occasion to have his son baptized. A great feast was held in the citadel in honour of the happy event, and Buckingham

[1] *Life of Anne of Austria.*

was there, his raiment the finest ever seen. The most distinguished orders of England, France and Spain blazed upon his bosom. A heron's plumes blazing in a clasp of diamonds waved from his hat. Afterwards there was a dance, and this gorgeous cavalier led out the Queen of France, she whose sister he had humiliated before all Europe as never a princess of Spain was humiliated before. But looking upon that gallant figure and open, beaming face, no woman who had breathed for long the air of Paris could remember wrongs done beyond the Pyrenees.

The next day young Gaston of Orleans gave a banquet. Gaston was heir-presumptive to the crown, a handsome and effeminate youth, who arrayed himself in the costliest fabrics and affected the most delicious perfumes. He danced like a courtier whose steps were his daily bread, this exquisite of the most delicate breed. Gaston might have been expected to be a shield to his young sister-in-law in the midst of a gay and licentious company, with her husband far away. But he himself had been the object of the King's jealousy, and now it was for Anne to protect her honour as best she might.

After the banquet at Gaston's, the Queen, escorted by the Duke of Buckingham, repaired to her home. Not, however, to rest. Madame de Chevreuse was of the party, and Madame did not rest when there was other diversion at hand.

Into the garden by the Somme racing silently past to the sea that soon would separate them the Duke and Anne walked. Madame de Chevreuse had Holland as her cavalier. The equerry on duty, Monsieur de Putange, took Madame de Vervet under his wing. On chairs by the river they sat and talked with the trees rustling in the night breeze and strange shadows enveloping stream and swards and wooded avenues.

But all the time the eyes of the company were not far from the Queen, and Buckingham at all events would be alone.

Some say he asked the Queen to converse with him in private. More likely not. But anyhow, they rose while the suite kept their places by the river. It was the lover's chance, one that would never return, and Buckingham made it his own.

Turning their backs upon the river they walked into the shadows of the ancient garden with its kindly trees inviting them, and alleys that, steeped in night, were soft lanes of velvety gloom.

Into one of these lonely walks the Duke guided the Queen. Lofty elms rose above them on one side. On the other was a high trellis covered with creeping plants. . . .

On the morrow they should leave Amiens. But he would not repine. For to-night the gods were good beyond his wildest dreams; Anne foolish and confiding beyond the folly of woman. Here he was with her in the dark, the tangled foliage and the sky their only roof-tree, without a page-boy at her command.

Buckingham was ever a madman when his blood was roused. He who had struck the youth before the King, and insulted the Spanish Minister before his master and his train, cared nothing for anything on earth save the desire of the moment. And now he forgot every call of honour, of chivalry, of hospitality. If but one moment of life remained he would live it for her . . .

Through the gardens, out over the river, there rang a cry that echoed through the dark-blue chancels of the night and struck dismay to the hearts of those who heard and recognized the voice.

"The Queen! The Queen! where was she!"[1]

Somebody should die because of that cry, for never should Her Majesty be alone and unguarded.

The saunterers by the river heard the cry and flew to the dark avenue where the Queen was in distress. Putange was first, as was his duty, to the rescue, only there should

[1] *The Life of Anne of Austria.*

THE FAMILY OF THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM

FROM THE PAINTING BY GERARD HONTHORST IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

have been no need for rescue; he should have been as her shadow. . . .

Against the trellis mantled over with creeping plants leaned Buckingham, his hand on his sword-hilt. . . . The man who would have kissed the Queen of France!

A little distance off was Anne, trembling with agitation.

Putange, hardly less agitated and hardly knowing what to do, was received with a reprimand for having quitted his mistress.

Putange had a sword as well as the Duke and would doubtless have gladly used it. Half a word from the Queen, half a sign, and the Duke was as good as dead, for though he might escape Putange, he could not hope to escape from a kingdom where every man who wore a sword would draw against him. But the Queen did not speak the word. She gave no signal. To Putange's inquiries as to what had alarmed Her Majesty, Anne replied:

"Surprise at finding myself alone with Monsieur L'Ambassadeur."

Putange could not run an Ambassador through for so small a cause. By this time a circle of curious courtiers and ladies had gathered in that dusky elm walk. What they saw well repaid their coming. They had seen what they would never live to see again, that of which they should always speak in whispers—a Queen of France standing in the night-shadows where she had been insulted by a parvenu Englishman. Then they retired to talk about a never-to-be-forgotten love-passage.

Some distance beyond Amiens, next day, the French Court took leave of the English Queen, and the occasion again afforded Buckingham a chance of assailing the Queen's heart. When the Duke came to Queen Anne's coach to take his leave and kiss her robe, "he hid himself with the curtain as if he had something to say to her, but in reality to wipe away his tears, which were falling plentifully." The lady in attendance on the Queen was mightily diverted by his grief. Describing the scene later, she said:

"She would be answerable to the King for the Queen's virtue but that she would not speak so positively of her hardness of heart since without doubt the tears of the Duke affected her spirits."

Leaving Anne and Marie de Medici at Amiens, Buckingham proceeded with the young Queen of England to Boulogne. When they reached the coast a gale was blowing. Wind and sea were friends to His Grace. They would not hurry him from his idol. And while the English party lay at Boulogne the gates of Amiens were open night and day lest a courier to Anne of Austria should be held up outside the walls, not that the courier should necessarily come from the Duke of Buckingham.

Madame de Chevreuse, who was accompanying Henrietta to Whitehall, frequently wrote to Anne while the weather detained them. One of these letters informed Her Majesty that Buckingham was returning to Amiens and warned her not to admit him to her presence.

Anne was in bed when she received the missive.

"I thought," she said, "we were delivered finally from the society of this Messieur."

But Anne's actions belied her tone. Hot-foot on the courier's heels came Buckingham, bent upon an errand which, if Anne was imprudent, could only lead to disgrace and ruin.

Buckingham's excuse for returning was that he wished to consult Marie de Medici on diplomatic business. From the episcopal palace, where the Queen-Dowager received him, he posted to the Queen-consort's house to do the real business of this wild enterprise. What followed was so extraordinary that it is best told in the words of a contemporary.

Madame de Mottiville says: "After having done with his chimerical negotiation he came to the reigning Queen, whom he found in bed almost alone. That Princess was informed by a letter from the Duchess de Chevreuse, who accompanied the Queen of England, of Buckingham's

coming back. She spoke of it in a jesting manner before Nogent and was not surprised when she saw the Duke. But she was so when he came freely to kneel down by her bedside, kissing her sheet with such uncommon transport that it was easy to perceive that his passion was violent and of the kind that does not leave the use of reason to those seized with it. The Queen has told me that she was troubled at it, which trouble, joined with a little indignation, made her continue a long time without speaking to him. The Countess de Taunay, then her lady of honour, not being willing to suffer the Duke to continue in that condition, told him with severity that what he did was not customary in France and would have him rise. But the Duke, without appearing surprised, disputed with the old lady, saying that he was no Frenchman and not bound to observe the laws of the kingdom. Then, addressing the Queen, he said about the most tender things imaginable, which she answered with complaints of his boldness, and perhaps (says the lady) without being very angry she ordered him severely to rise and begone. He did so, and having seen her next day in presence of all the Court, he went away, feeling resolved to return to France as soon as possible."

It is certain that after this Buckingham was welcome no more in France. He had left Madrid on bad terms with Olivarez, and if he had not quarrelled with Richelieu it was perhaps because the great Cardinal was not a husband, nor yet a lover, but a statesman whose feelings were controlled by his policy.

At Dover, Charles received his young bride, and proceeding to Canterbury we obtain an insight into the marriage customs of the period which show that even Royalty itself did not escape unwelcome pleasantries. "The Queen retired to rest. Charles followed shortly, being attended to the apartment by two of the lords of the bedchamber, whose duty it was to undress him. It appears that the King's first step was to secure the doors of the bedchamber

(which were seven in number) with his own hand. He then undressed himself, and having excluded his attendants bolted the door." From this it appears that not even the nuptial chamber of the Sovereign would have been sacred from the coarse humour of His Majesty's household had locks and bolts not protected it. "The next morning," we are told, "he was pleased with the lords that he had beguiled them and had ever since being very jocund."

On the 16th of June Charles arrived with his bride in the capital. They entered the Royal barge at Gravesend, whence, attended by a procession of barges of the nobility, they proceeded up the river in regal state. From London Bridge to Whitehall thousands of vessels crowded the Thames. Every lighter and barge was filled with spectators, while crowds from far and near were massed on the banks. Guns roared from the Tower and the warships; and the populace, though plague raged round them, and rain fell in torrents, forgot their miseries and cheered as only Englishmen can when their hearts are in their plaudits.[1]

The King and Queen were each dressed in green. The windows of the Royal cabin, notwithstanding the rain, were kept open, and the Queen acknowledged with vivacity the shouts of the delighted populace by waving her hand. It was observed that her head reached the King's shoulder and that she was young enough to grow taller. In the midst of all the commotion a vessel overturned and one hundred people were thrown into the river, but happily no one was drowned.

Meanwhile Anne had returned to Fontainebleau—to the King who knew all.

That cry in the night by the banks of the Somme had reached the dour monarch in his palace-solitude. He could have loved Anne had circumstances aided him. She would have loved him had he given her the warmth of his arms, the smiles, the flattery perhaps, that is the wine

[1] *Court and Times of Charles I.*

of a lovely woman's life. But this King with happiness within reach of both hands knew not how to grasp it.

Richelieu hoped by a masterstroke to make her his ally, his friend, the instrument of his policy. He offered to plead her cause with Louis. But the proud daughter of Spain preferred a broken heart to pity and peace. She would have none of the Cardinal's intercession.

Buckingham had passed, in a sense, out of her life for ever. But he had turned her vain foolish head, and she had turned his. He was gone but she clung to his memory, while he toasted her at Whitehall, and lived continually in the company of his divinity's likeness. When the French Ambassador entered Buckingham's mansion in the Strand he saw on every hand the portrait of his sovereign lady, while the same loved image was never far from His Grace's heart.

Scarcely had King Charles and Henrietta begun their married life when dissensions arose. It was indeed well-nigh impossible that it could be otherwise. The Queen was a Catholic and a woman of spirit, surrounded by Catholic nobles and ecclesiastics who were incapable of accommodating their views to the bitter prejudices of their new country.

A ridiculous example of the strife that was waged at Court is vouched for in the annals of the day. The Queen's chaplain was eager to have the privilege of saying grace before meals but was outmanœuvred by his Protestant rival, much to his chagrin, while the courtiers shared the feelings of the belligerents according as they were either English or French. The climax was inimitable farce. The two chaplains waited like hounds of mettle on the leash for the last mouthful to be swallowed. Again the English chaplain scored. Rome, however, was not to be altogether eclipsed, and the Frenchman in a loud voice essayed to drown his rival's prayers with his own. In the end the King heard neither for he walked away from the table in disgust.

For Charles there could not be much happiness, seeing that on the one hand he loved his Queen, while on the other hand every motive of worldly interest obliged him to treat the prejudices of his own countrymen with deference. And now was seen the fruits of Buckingham's quarrel with Richelieu, his love for the French Queen, and his desire at all costs to bring about a position that would enable him to pursue the object of his passion.

It was Buckingham's policy to foster a quarrel between his master and the French King in order, as they said, that he might return to Paris to arrange a peace—to Paris and Anne of Austria! When war is desired an excuse is easily found. England took up arms on behalf of the French Protestants, and Buckingham led in person the disastrous expedition to Rochelle. But neither in the Council nor in the field was he a match for Richelieu, and he returned with the loss of everything that a general would prize except his reputation for personal courage.

Charles was already immersed in the quarrel with the Parliament which was to end in his ruin. The disgrace of Rochelle embittered the patriots, and Buckingham, now the most hated man in the kingdom, was declared the cause of all its misfortunes. He was publicly insulted in the streets, and a pasquinade, affixed to a post in Coleman Street, ran: "Who rules the kingdom? The King. Who rules the King? The Duke. Who rules the Duke? The devil."

Meanwhile preparations were made for renewing the expedition to Rochelle and Buckingham proceeded to Portsmouth to assume the command, lodging at a house in the High Street. After breakfast he "cut a caper or two" and then, as he was about to leave the house, he was stabbed to the heart by Felton, a disappointed officer, who launched his victim into eternity with the words, "God have mercy on thy soul." His apology for the

deed was, "I killed him for the cause of God and my country."

Now was there no favourite at Court to divert from Charles the wrath of the people. The way was clear for the course of the tragedy that was to end when the King's head fell at Whitehall.

CHAPTER V

FRANCES, LADY PURBECK, CONDEMNED TO THE WHITE SHEET

WHEN the seventeenth century was nearing the close of its second decade, a young heiress upon whom the gallants of the Court had begun to cast covetous eyes was told that her horoscope was cast. Her father had chosen for her a husband.

This girl was Frances Coke, daughter of the Lord Chief Justice of England. Her father had his way, and the beautiful creature, born to such fair prospects, was destined never to enjoy them. Her name was to be a by-word throughout her brief life, a sinner rendered immortal by her frailties.

George Villiers had a brother John. He was older than the King's favourite but without any of his genius for acquiring wealth or fortune. Unhappily his mother and brother took his career into their hands. George's talent for climbing had made him one of the greatest figures in Europe. His mother had in her own fashion achieved success. She married for the third time a young gentleman named Compton, a scion of the house of Northampton. Compton, unlike his predecessors in the lady's favour, had great wealth, but gossip accused him of being an arrant coward. When a famous bully named Bird challenged him to a duel one of the conditions of a meeting was that they should fight in a saw-pit as affording no opportunity for running away. Compton agreed, and whether through good fortune or good swordsmanship ran his man through and ever afterwards basked in the renown of the exploit.

The road to success chosen for John Villiers was that which his mother had traversed. He was to marry well.

Frances Coke had the misfortune to be the damsel chosen to fulfil this high destiny. The girl's wishes were of no account. Love had no place in the great lawyer's world, at least not such love as tempts a very young girl to entrust her happiness to a bridegroom. Doubtless, in his own crabbed fashion, his daughter was dear to him. But he failed to realize that, like her father, Frances had a stubborn will, a dogged courage of her own. To him she was only a lovely chattel. He would dispose of her where her loveliness would shine in a worthy setting. And he would purchase in exchange a few more years of lucrative office and of Royal favour.

In a variety of ways Coke had incurred the King's displeasure. His Majesty fancied himself above the law, and the spirit of the age was one of acquiescence in despotic pretensions. But it was not Coke's spirit. He had had the hardihood to oppose the King in matters upon which His Majesty had set his heart, acting with so much courage, and on principles so worthy, that had his temper been less hard and selfish, and his motives nearly so high as his principles, he would be remembered still as another Hampden.

But Coke, though incorruptible as a judge, was valiant only up to a point. Threatened with the loss of his place he flung himself with abject humility on the King's mercy. But even in his humility he was cross-grained. A place had fallen vacant which lay in his gift; Buckingham desired the disposition of it. Coke submitted with a bad grace and received his dismissal.

It was in this calamity that he elected to save himself by the bartering of his child. A word from George Villiers and the King would once more smile upon him. He would purchase that word with his daughter's fair hand.

But Coke reckoned without his wife. He might build

the altar and prepare for the sacrifice, but far from aiding him to bind the victim she would, if she could, preserve her inviolate. This lady was Coke's second wife. A daughter of Lord Exeter, and a granddaughter of the great Lord Burghley, a companion of Arabella Stuart in the days of the Princess's prosperity, it was as the widowed Lady Hatton, then only twenty years old, that he won her; and Lady Hatton she remained to the end, preferring the title of her first lord to the name of his famous successor. Coke was not fashioned by nature, nor yet by art, to win the heart of Court beauty, maid or widow. It was a marriage of convenience. She was a Cecil, and the Cecils saw in Coke a future Lord Chancellor. Encouraged therefore by the approval of her family she entrusted her happiness to the great lawyer.

Another great lawyer, and an incomparably greater man, was also a suitor for her hand. This was Francis Bacon, the young widow's cousin. But the Cecils slighted the man of genius for the man of high position and, what appeared to them, assured prospects, and Coke carried off the prize. Bacon was not chagrined by the ever-present spectacle of his victorious rival's happiness. Coke and Lady Hatton were as miserable as ever were a pair whose union was sanctified by no spark of love; and when Coke fell Bacon, still unappeased, painted " his true shape as in a glass " to embitter his retirement.

Lady Hatton resembled her lord in one quality which, however, only widened the gulf between her and her husband. Possessed of great wealth she steadfastly refused to make her husband absolute master of it. But, though she clung to her independence in this respect, it was all the advantage she derived from it, for, while she remained mistress-in-law of her own, her husband seems to have been master in fact.

Lady Hatton had too long and too bitterly regretted her own loveless marriage to lend a willing ear to the project for mating her only daughter to the fool of the Villiers

family. Frances might hope for happiness with a man who would be her equal in years, in birth and in fortune. Whatever difficulties her father's policy had created for him, whatever his needs, there was no reason why she should wreck her tenderest hopes to placate an upstart favourite. Lady Hatton's reply therefore to the proposed marriage was a blank refusal.

Coke, however, was not to be lightly thwarted. His fortunes were at stake, and to retrieve them he would destroy the jewel of his house. Without his wife the negotiations went on. Villiers, or more likely his mother, for she was best at bargaining, demanded ten thousand pounds as the girl's dowry.[1] It was ten thousand drops of blood required from Coke's heart, for he loved money, and even if he did not he well might have resented the impudence of this demand for so unequal a provision. He suggested a much smaller amount. On the one hand, however, there was certain disgrace. On the other there was the hope of restoration to favour. Lady Compton was firm and there was nothing for it but to acquiesce.

When Lady Hatton learned that the fate of the fair Frances was settled, that a marriage was to take place in spite of her, she took her daughter away from their town house, in what was then the aristocratic suburb of Holborn, to Oatlands, and there, a little later, a veritable pitched battle was fought for the possession of the maid.

In the interval Lady Hatton and her friends conceived a plan for outwitting the ex-Lord Chief Justice. If only Frances could be married out of hand she would be saved from Villiers and from her father. The young Earl of Oxford was chosen for this honour on grounds that are obscure. He had, perhaps, already shown some partiality for the girl's society, and he was now, it would seem, pleased at a turn of affairs which thrust the prize into his arms

[1] Gardiner's *History*.

without any of the doubts and anxieties of an ordinary wooing. A contract which the girl signed was drawn up. There was, however, one fatal flaw in the scheme. Oxford was away travelling, and was not so deeply infatuated that he would travel post-haste from Venice with a wedding ring, and in defiance of her father and of the Villiers' clique, with the King himself at their head, rescue the girl from the fate that threatened her.

Nor did Coke sit down idly and permit these schemes to mature. Any day Oxford might trim his sails for England, and it behoved one who had made other plans to be ready for him. But, though a father might naturally follow his daughter to his country house at Oatlands and bring her away for sufficient reasons, by force if necessary, Coke, ever the man of law, would not set out until he had obtained a warrant. Strangely enough he was not the only applicant for a warrant. Buckingham's mother also obtained one, though one cannot imagine upon what grounds her ladyship was thus authorised to meddle with the unfortunate Frances. Coke and Lady Compton then repaired to Oatlands, where a battle-royal took place for the custody of the coveted heiress.

The ex-Lord Chief Justice was accompanied by an armed retinue, with his son by a former marriage, "fighting Clem Coke," amongst the band.

The inmates of the old manor house were not unprepared for their warlike visitors, who arrived to find doors and windows bolted and barred against them and not a soul in view.

An entrance was demanded, and demanded in vain, and it became plain to the besiegers that the garrison would have to be reduced by either force or guile. According to one account, the great lawyer seized a log of timber which was employed as a battering-ram and so lustily that the door soon fell before the assault. Another version has it that a casement, insecurely fastened, gave ingress to the attackers. At all events the stronghold was

entered and the two ladies were at the mercy of their enemies.[1]

Over the old manor house Coke rushed and at length came face to face with his beautiful wife and their still more beautiful daughter. Coke seized the girl, Lady Hatton seized her too, and together they struggled for the prize. In vain Frances clung to her mother. Victory was to the stronger. Coke carried the girl to a coach where Lady Compton was waiting and away they drove with her from her mother's guardianship.

Lady Hatton took her grievance to the Privy Council, which at the time was open to all sorts of complaints, grave and trivial, the rank of the parties concerned constituting the chief claim to a hearing.

Villiers was above the Privy Council, above paternal rights; and Villiers was now on the side of Coke. The Council therefore was content to administer a patriarchal admonition to the belligerents to live together for the future in amity in the same house with Frances. It was, however, the girl Lady Hatton wanted, not her husband. In her desperation she played what she thought to be a trump card. She produced the contract of marriage with Oxford.

The document affrighted the other side. They realized that they might rise up any morning to find themselves hopelessly checkmated, for he was a tardy wooer who could not marry in London of the seventeenth century at day or night so that he was sober enough to speak and the lady was willing. Coke's own marriage had indeed been a clandestine one. The father felt therefore that he could not be sure of victory while Lady Hatton had her liberty. He applied to the Council and her ladyship was committed to the custody of Alderman Bennet.

The preparations for the marriage were then hurried forward, and when the great day came the King and Queen and Prince of Wales attended the wedding, His Majesty

[1] *The Curious Case of Lady Purbeck*, by Thomas Longueville.

giving the bride away. Lady Hatton had been bidden to the ceremony but she did not come. She pleaded that she was ill, and she no doubt was with chagrin. The Cecils took up her quarrel and none of the bride's maternal relatives graced the festival with their company.

Soon Sir Edward Coke discovered that he had made a bad bargain. He was merely restored to his place at the Council board without office. He had reached the limits of utility so far as George Villiers was concerned. Coke had not another daughter. He had not another brother. As for the rest, the lawyer was only good to cite rules and authorities where neither was needed, where a discreet word of flattery, a timely jest, or even an angry flash from privileged eyes was worth them all.

Her ladyship knew all this well, for when Arabella Stuart had been the greatest of the maids-of-honour she had been one of the most beautiful. She was not perhaps surprised therefore when, one evening in November 1617, Villiers drove up to Bennet's house with the order for her release. This was an overture from the Royal favourite which Lady Hatton was not such a fool as to reject, and bowing to the inevitable she made peace with her old enemies; all save one, and that was her husband.

Her return to Royal favour was celebrated with a great ball that was honoured with the presence of the King. One absentee there was, however, from the *fête*, one whom every guest looked for, and doubtless enjoyed himself the better at not finding him there. Sir Edward Coke dare not cross the threshold. He had entered Oatlands by force. This night the King was in his wife's house, and all the battering-rams in England would not obtain for him admission to her presence. The King asked her to receive him for the occasion. But Lady Hatton was as stubborn as Coke.

"Sire," she said, "if he should come in in one door I should go out in another."

A little later proposals were made to her which explained why her liberty had been restored to her. These were not so flattering as she had perhaps imagined to herself. She was told that if she made over one of her estates on John Villiers, her unwelcome son-in-law, she would be raised to the peerage in her own right. But Lady Hatton valued her estate beyond the barren honour and declined. A peerage there was created. John Villiers became Viscount Purbeck, lest under a simpler title his wife's shame and his own misfortunes should enjoy the mercy of obscurity. The title thus created was destined to be on the lips of Londoners in one way or another for years, as the extraordinary scandal of which the Viscountess was the central figure ran its course from the shock of her fall to the reunion years later of the erring wife and her forgiving husband.

The name of Lord Suffolk is already familiar as the father of Frances, Lady Essex, who was now expiating her crimes in seclusion. But the family was not without cadets at Whitehall. Frances had a brother, Robert Howard, who was Master of the Robes to the Prince of Wales.

With Howard young Lady Purbeck fell in love. She had married Villiers against her will, and his gifts were not such as would enable him to overcome with ease her first repulsion. Not only was he very much her senior in years, but worse still, he was a dull fellow who, it is said, was occasionally not quite sane. He was, at all events, from time to time, in the hands of "amateur keepers." For some reason or other doubts have been thrown upon the reality of his affliction. He was certainly of a far more serious temperament than his volatile brother, George, with whom he remonstrated more than once as to his course of life. He also became a Roman Catholic, and to adopt that faith at a time when its profession made a man liable to barbarous pains and penalties may well have seemed lunacy to those who would sacrifice nothing

for any faith. Whatever may have been the truth about John Villiers, soon all the world knew that, though he had secured the heiress's hand and her dowry, he had no share in her heart.

The public scandal came in 1624 when Lady Purbeck gave birth to a son in apartments at Cripplegate, and the father who had forced her into a loveless marriage was thus obliged to taste of the bitterest fruits that could wait upon his tyranny.

Courts of morality were still portion of the legal machinery of England. Curiously enough Coke, when at the height of his power, had been an implacable enemy to these survivals of mediæval government at the cost of incurring the King's displeasure. These courts could inflict fines which went to a fund for the repairs of St Paul's Cathedral. They could likewise order imprisonment. Before the High Commission Court, as the ecclesiastical Star Chamber was called, the delinquents were now cited.

Lady Purbeck was arrested and sent to the custody of Alderman Barker, while Howard was confined in the Fleet prison.

Buckingham had made up his mind to ruin the lady. He learned that his sister-in-law, following the example of Lady Essex, had visited a notorious fellow named Lamb—another Forman—to solicit his aid in alienating her husband's affections and gaining those of her paramour. The evidence, however, was not sufficient to warrant a charge of sorcery, and the lady was condemned for her immorality alone.

Howard was the first punished. He escaped lightly —ever the man's fortune, perhaps, in such circumstances. He was excommunicated publicly at St Paul's cross.

Very different was the fate of the lady. She was condemned to do penance barefoot in a sheet at the Savoy church, which was near her residence. She was to be

separated from her husband but was not to be divorced.

For the town a delicious entertainment seemed in prospect. Not every day was a daughter of the House of Cecil to be seen in a white sheet and barefoot in the public streets, another Jane Shore. In the coffee-houses and ordinaries, and wherever men and women congregated, we may be sure they talked of nothing else. The Purbecks had given them choice gossip for long. But this was to be the crown of all their indebtedness to that distinguished family. The town was, however, doomed to bitter disappointment. When Sunday morning came, and the crowds thronged to the Savoy, they looked in vain for the beautiful girl, deathly pale, the picture of misery in her snowy-white raiment. Frances was in hiding.

Immediately the Sergeant-at-Arms, with a warrant from the High Commission Court, applied at the lady's residence for an explanation of her contumacy. But no reply was vouchsafed his summons. Such contempt was not to be endured. The law should be enforced at all costs. Young Frances should not escape that dreadful white robe of penitence.

Lady Compton, now the Countess of Buckingham, was on friendly terms with the Ambassador of Savoy, who lived next door to Lady Purbeck, and she appealed to His Excellency to assist in bringing the erring wife to retribution.

She proposed that the officer of the law should pass through the Embassy gardens and enter her daughter-in-law's establishment by the back way. The Ambassador shrank from playing so ungallant a part, but the Countess was not a person whose enmity could be lightly courted by a foreign diplomatist who would stand well at Court. He therefore resolved to outwit her by yielding to her. He suffered the constable to enter and advised the good man to remain concealed until a suitable opportunity

should arise for completing the scheme. Meanwhile he put him in a place where, by looking through a window, he could observe all that took place in front of the house. Soon there was plenty to engage all his attention, all his wits.

According to Sir John Finnit, the Ambassador's gentlemen dressed his page, "a fair handsome boy," in woman's dress, got him into the street, then thrust him hurriedly into his lord's coach, which was so placed as to aid the deception, and then drove past with him down the Strand as if it were the lady escaping. A multitude followed, and the officers of the law, convinced that their prey had escaped under their very noses, took to their heels in hot pursuit.

This was Lady Purbeck's opportunity. She fled into the country, settling down with Howard in Shropshire, where several children were born to them.

In 1632 Lady Purbeck was called from her paramour. Her father was ill. The old man's days were numbered, and forgetful of past injuries, she returned and nursed him until his death.

But the end of her troubles had not come. When her father was no more she came up to London. This was in 1635. Howard was already there, but whether they had resumed the old guilty relations is doubtful. Charles, however, ordered Laud to "abate the scandal" and the Primate proceeded to do so.

But the same means which had accomplished the release of many a captive set her free. Gold turned the key, and donning a page's attire Frances fled and never rested until she had reached the coast. Not even then would she tarry for long. That dreadful white sheet which had haunted her for years was still very near! London was not afar off and there they would never forget it. There it would always be awaiting her. So the fair page took ship and landed at Guernsey, whence escape to France was easy; all the easier as a kinsman of hers was governor

of the island and was glad to be rid of a lady in such ill-repute at Court. To Paris, therefore, the friendless, hunted woman turned in search of that peace which she could not find in her native land.

But even in Paris there was no rest for the sinner.[1] Lord Scudamore, the British Ambassador in France, was ordered to make inquiries concerning her, and a messenger of the Courts was sent from England to serve a writ upon her. An Embassy servant accompanied the man to show him where the fugitive lived. But Lady Purbeck had probably been warned to expect the visitor. A maid peeped at him through a grating and refused to admit him. The vigilance of the Purbeck household was too much for the courier and was greater than the Ambassador could circumvent. He therefore told the messenger to enclose his writ in a box, throw the box through a window, and then knocking at the door tell the servant that Lady Purbeck was to take notice of the despatch thus introduced.

This was a simple plan, but it had one drawback. There could be no proof that the maid had delivered her message, none that Lady Purbeck had obeyed it, none indeed that she was in the house at all. A supplementary ruse was therefore adopted. A woman was sent under colour of speaking to her sister, who was in Lady Purbeck's service. She was answered by Lady Purbeck herself. This at all events proved that her ladyship was still in the house. At this juncture, however, Cardinal Richelieu entered the comedy. Richelieu had no reason to love Buckingham nor Charles either, and the cool impudence of making the English King's writ run in France was not to be calmly endured.

A party of fifty archers with their officers descended therefore upon Lady Purbeck's house with the Cardinal's warrant to vindicate there the jurisdiction of his Sovereign. And Scudamore was glad to hurry the Court messenger

[1] *Domestic State Papers.*

out of the way before he was seized for contempt of the Royal authority.

Lady Purbeck had now become a Catholic, and having to choose between the continual attentions of a process-server from England, or a detachment of French archers permanently billeted on her, she sought peace in a convent. Her case had by this time become an affair of high politics. The Queen of France wrote to Queen Henrietta to obtain a licence for her to return to England. Charles, however, would not relent until in the bitter school of adversity he had learned clemency, and thus only after many weary years of exile was she permitted to return to her native land.

At the opening in 1640 of the last Parliament of the reign of Charles I., the Star Chamber proceedings were brought before the House of Commons on a question of Privilege. They were declared illegal and Howard was voted a sum of one thousand pounds compensation for false imprisonment, while a fine of five hundred pounds was imposed on Laud, as President of the High Commission Court.

Meanwhile the tragedy of Lady Purbeck had been suddenly transformed into a romance. The husband she had so cruelly wronged, the husband who had done her no wrong save the irreparable wrong of marrying her at all, received her back.

He had always loved her, had always been ready to forgive her. Now had his day of content come. Here was his own Frances Coke returned to his arms, returned of her own free will, she who had been as a wild bird whom no man could stay. It was all different, of course. There was plenty to forget, even after he had forgiven her. But Purbeck was the fool, the saint of his family, and he did both. For six years the strange romance continued—six years of peace, of penitence. Then the limit of her trial had been reached. Her novitiate was ended. The bruised Magdalen would no more be haunted with the fear

that her sins would once more rise up against her, and that in the end the terrible white sheet would mantle her, a Queen of Shame. No more would she dream of gaping crowds at the Savoy enjoying the spectacle of a young girl's degradation. She was called to a higher tribunal, where the Judge that alone judges truly awards the garment.

CHAPTER VI

THE RICHELIEU OF ENGLAND TRIED FOR HIS LIFE

A NEW peer met a famous commoner one day soon after the promotion of the former.

"You perceive," said the peer, "I have left you."

"Yes," replied the commoner, "but we shall never leave you while you have a head on your shoulders."

This jest, for doubtless a jest it was, though surely dashed with bitterness, was a prophecy. The lord was Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford; the commoner was Pym.

Fourteen years later, on a dreary November day, these words must have come back from the dark valley of the past and echoed and re-echoed with tragic forebodings in the ears of a sick and broken man, the most hated man in all England. Thomas Wentworth's day of unharnessed power was closed. It was the twilight and the reckoning.

The 11th day of November 1640 marked the beginning of the end. Broken in health, soured with suffering and long years of anxious conflict with the forces of liberty, he lay in his town house while Parliament rung with his name, and in the coffee-houses and taverns, in streets and market-places, men spoke of nothing but the great fight now impending between the Earl and the Parliament, and which, if the Earl lost, his life should be the forfeit.

On the 2nd of March 1629, a few years after Thomas Wentworth had been ennobled, Charles had resolved to govern as a despot. During eleven disastrous years the King had clung to his ideal of personal rule. Illegal taxation had goaded the English to desperation. Tyrannical interference with their religion had made the Scots rebels.

In Ireland, Strafford had played at will the military autocrat, grinding the King's subjects to the dust, while he organized an army to be employed in his master's service in Britain when the time should come to decide by the sword who should rule the island, King or people.

Of the King's advisers, as he advanced, step by step, in his career of folly, Strafford was the ablest, the most courageous, the most imperious—the Richelieu of his country.

Archbishop Laud and Lord Cottington shared with Strafford the King's confidence.[1] But to the public generally Strafford was the Cabinet of the Sovereign, the King's leader along the path to destruction.

Eleven years of vain effort to play at the splendid independence of a Louis Quatorze, and then Charles, at last driven to bay, summoned the Long Parliament.

Strafford was, at the time, in Yorkshire trying to preserve discipline in a badly-armed, half-starved, unpaid army, mustered to fight for the King but more concerned for food and money than for His Majesty's service. In his native county his lordship heard that the first act of the Commons had been to resolve upon inquiry into his management of the affairs of Ireland during the half-dozen years he had lorded it there. It was a challenge, and so he understood it, for he knew full well that save as an excuse to strike him down, sins done against Ireland could never be so black as to damn one otherwise honest.

He might have remained in comparative safety in the North while the Parliamentary attack developed, for it was a long and weary and dangerous road that led from London to Yorkshire, and to arrest him there an army should be sent against him. He might have made assurance doubly sure by flying beyond the seas. But this born despot would face the storm confident that he could not perish. He took up the challenge, and bidding his servants prepare for a long journey south, though a subject for his bed rather than for the road, he set out for London.

[1] Clarendon's *Rebellion*.

Strafford arrived in town late on the Monday night. On Tuesday he rested. But at Westminster there was now no rest. There events were moving with passionate haste. For eleven years the nation had been dumb. It had been in bonds. Not knowing how soon the key would again be turned in the lock, leaving the representatives of the nation without the gates of the palace, where alone they could speak and act as freemen, the popular chiefs took no risks. They only paused for bite and sup and sleep, so much was there to be done. Above all, they had to strike down the King's right-hand man before he could strike them. But against the King himself no man dared to breathe a word.

On Wednesday, the 11th of November, Strafford had sufficiently recovered from his long journey from the North to leave his house. Friends had been to see him and had reported that down at Westminster, on the floor of the House of Commons, and in the lobbies, his name was on every lip, his fate the subject of anxiety to his few friends, of certainty to his enemies. Even now he might have fled. The river was open to him. A hundred barges lay ready to carry him down to the Pool, where for gold—and of that he had abundance—he might charter a ship that would run the gauntlet of a battle-squadron. Not a hand would have been raised to bar his flight, for once an outlaw his power for evil would have vanished for ever. But Strafford, blind to omens that any man might have felt and seen, clung to his belief in himself, and, proudly contemptuous of his accusers, he went out to his fate.

Entering his carriage he drove to Westminster. . . . He would return to his house no more. . . .

In the streets knots of people stood in eager converse, and every moment these idle gossipers grew more numerous. There was business afoot that drew them from far and near, business that made them desert shop and counting-house. Strafford's enemies were already hard on his track, keen for blood, and blood would have.

It was past three o'clock in the afternoon when he arrived at the House. Rapidly he advanced to the Gilded Chamber. He was tired and ill, but pride and the soldier's spirit that rises to meet danger lent him strength, and with haughty front he stood amongst the peers. Not a man there was his friend. Years of Royal favour had provided for him a harvest of enmity greater far than had ever been the lot of Buckingham. Buckingham at least had the gracious art of making friends; Strafford knew only how to make enemies.

Never had lord, summoned by the King's writ to Parliament to take part in the Councils of his Peers, a more hostile reception. Scarcely was his lowering brow seen than the nobles, forgetful of their wonted serenity, called on him to quit the Chamber. Confounded by the insulting tumult so foreign to such a place, little wonder he hardly knew what to say or do. But that mattered little now. For Thomas Wentworth there was still but one avenue to liberty. And that lay far from the citadel of government where for so long he had been a dictator, and was now but a plain Englishman of whom justice was required. James Maxwell, Keeper of the Black Rod, was at his side.

In obedience to Maxwell he withdrew to an antechamber. It was his first taste of defeat for many a year; and every step must have been anguish to that overbearing spirit, which in the day of prosperity had meted out measure, strict and stern, to high and low, as though his last thought was that any man should love him, or that of any man's love he should ever have need.

It was only for a few minutes he was left alone to his own bitter reflections. Then he was summoned to the bar of the House.

To the bar of the House stalked the Earl. . . . This was foolery for which the irascible Wentworth had no fancy. But there was worse to come.

"Kneel. . . ."

He dare not disobey. He had in his pride entered the

stronghold of his enemies, and now he had no choice but to humour them.

The King's right-hand man, he who in Ireland had been an autocrat, ruling proud nobles and chiefs and people after his own sweet will, went on his knees. The descent begun but a few minutes before was swift indeed.

And while the great man, before whose frown men were wont to tremble, knelt, there entered the old friend whom long ago he had deserted for a coronet.

The coronet was still his. But, coronet and all, he was prostrate in the dust, while the man whose voice now rang clear and commanding through the Chamber, arraigning him as a traitor to his land, was he whom he had left behind a plain commoner. Now John Pym, this plain commoner, was the most powerful man in England, its real King.

Pym had come up from the Commons as its messenger and mouthpiece. The Commons had resolved to impeach Strafford, and the Commons, just elected by a nation whose anger was boiling over, was supreme.

And what the prostrate Earl heard spoken against him was this:

"My lords,—The knights, citizens and burgesses now assembled in the House of Peers have received information of divers traitorous designs and practices of a great peer of this House, and in virtue of a command from them, I do here, in the name of all the Commons of England, impeach Thomas, Earl of Strafford, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, of High Treason. And they have commanded me farther to desire your lordships that he may be sequestered from the Parliament and furthermore committed to prison. They further commanded me to let you know that they will, within a very few days, resort to your lordships with the particular articles and grounds of this accusation."

Instantly Pym withdrew the Chamber was filled with clamour, not with contention because some man would defend the quarry from the anger of the Commons. Here there was unanimity. All wanted blood.

Some apprehension of the peril of his situation must, by this time, have dawned upon Strafford. He demanded to be allowed to speak, but tyranny would close the mouth of the tyrant. He managed, however, to protest his innocence, and claimed his liberty until some charge should have been proved against him. He then withdrew while they debated his case, and very brief debate it was, for what they wanted was not to follow the course prescribed by precedent, justice and dignity, but to devise the quickest, the surest means of crushing the man who was the King's mainstay in all his folly and tyranny.

Presently he was again summoned to the bar. Again he was commanded to his knees, and thus a second time abased. Strafford heard the Lord Keeper pronounce him a State prisoner and condemn him to the Tower.

" My Lord of Strafford," he said, " the whole House of Commons, in their own name, and in the name of the whole Commons of England, have this day accused your lordship to the lords of the Higher House of Parliament of High Treason. The articles they will in a few days produce. In the meantime they have desired of my lords, and my lords have accordingly resolved that your lordship should be committed into safe custody to the gentleman usher, and be sequestered from the House, until your lordship shall clear yourself of the accusations that shall be laid against you."

The Earl arose, and in charge of Black Rod retreated to the ante-room. There the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland was made to unbuckle his sword, for in the Tower he would have no use for the trusty blade which he now handed to his custodian. Then the Viceroy and his escort passed into the open air.

The knots of people had grown to a great crowd, for like wildfire the news had spread through the town that the King's favourite had literally been brought to his knees, and that when he left Westminster it would be for the ominous hospitality of the Tower.

Strafford's servants awaited him with his carriage, and he now ordered them to come forward.

Black Rod, however, instantly reminded him that he was no longer a freeman who at his pleasure might bid his servants come and go.[1]

"Your lordship is my prisoner," he said, "and must enter my coach."

"What's the matter? . . . What's the matter?" queried the crowd.

"A small matter, I warrant you," sneered Strafford.

"High treason is a small matter," jeered a bystander, and with these significant words, recalling many a blood-red story, ringing in his ears, Strafford drove away.

At three o'clock he had entered Parliament. At four he left it, a captive; swift despatch that augured ill for him whose case had been considered with such unanimity.

And while Parliament rejoiced, while the people chuckled at the downfall of the greatest man in the realm, while in the back parlours where Pym and his comrades gathered to debate their plans there was the complacent delight of veterans nearing the victorious end of a long campaign, in Strafford's house loving hearts beat sadly.

There was Will and Nan and little Arabella, homely English names, eloquent in their way of that side of Strafford's character of which the great world knew nothing for this man, so quick to blaze into fierce anger, so sensitive to injury, so revengeful, loved his children with a woman's tenderness. He served the King for glory, still more perhaps because the leisured life of a wealthy country gentleman was impossible to a man of his temperament. They said he was not less insensible than most men of his time to the attractions of female beauty, that his heart was long in the keeping of one who had no right to it—Lucy, Countess of Carlisle.[2] But dearer far to Strafford than King or country, dearer than the sweets of power or the

[1] *Life of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford.* [2] Jesse's *Memoirs.*

favour of the beautiful Countess of whom the poets raved in song, were his children.

Strafford's first wife was a daughter of the House of Clifford. One day she discovered a packet of letters written in a lady's hand to her husband. In an evil moment she yielded to the impulse to pry into a secret that could not fail to shatter her happiness. They had been written by a rival for her lord's affections. The unhappy wife, overwhelmed by the discovery, upbraided him for his infidelity. . . . A blow, it is said, was struck and Margaret Clifford fell, her life and that of her unborn child the forfeit of her curiosity.[1]

The story belongs to the gossip of the time, and is contradicted to some extent by the fact that Strafford always continued on good terms with his first wife's kindred. Two other ladies filled in succession the place of Margaret Clifford. But the woman of all others whose name is linked with Strafford's is the beautiful Lady Carlisle—the Madame de Chevreuse of the Court of Charles I.

We first hear of Lady Carlisle as the companion of her father, the Earl of Northumberland, in the Tower in the previous reign. It was during this time that James Hay, a gentleman of the bedchamber to King James, fell in love with her. Hay was a Scot whose voluntary exile from his native heath was richly rewarded. He was given an heiress in marriage and was made a knight of the Bath and a peer. The heiress died, as well she might, for Hay's extravagance would break the heart of a Midas. And then it was that he fixed his affections on the beautiful Lucy Percy. The old Earl of Northumberland would have spitted the upstart Scot before receiving him into his family. But Lucy, though a Percy, had a girl's heart, and a girl's perverse fancy for a handsome spendthrift. One fine day the gay widower went down to the Tower and Lucy kept a tryst that made her his wife.

[1] Robert Baillie's *Letters and Journals.*

A daughter of the line of Percy was by birth entitled to a high place at the English Court, but had she been born in a lower rank, Lucy would nevertheless have risen to fame in the society of her generation. Courtiers, politicians and men of letters all fell in love with the young beauty who had eloped from the Tower to marry the man of her choice in defiance of her kindred.

Wentworth was too rugged, too imperious, to play for long the part of slave to a capricious beauty. But the Countess of Carlisle was something more than a capricious beauty. There was method in her caprice. She had the arts and graces to captivate. She had the wit to make her successes steps to power and influence. She was Queen Henrietta's trusted friend, and Henrietta was now everything to her husband—wife, friend, counsellor, favourite.[1] Lady Carlisle was therefore second in importance at Court to the Queen alone, if indeed even to her; and Strafford's homage may have been largely diplomatic, though with something of tenderness in the diplomacy. For long she was his political ally. But whether a softer bond united them it is impossible to say with certainty. Lucy, a heroine of one school, and a traitress and libertine to another, must remain a puzzle to the end of the story.

Sir Toby Matthews, an accomplished man of letters, a courtier, a traveller, the son of an Archbishop of Canterbury, and himself a Catholic priest, withal a polite and "compleat gentleman," has left a pen-picture of Lady Carlisle which gives us an idea above all of the elusiveness of her nature.[2] Those who loved her hardly knew why they loved her, and certainly they never could be sure if they were loved in return. Those who admired her to-day and basked in her smiles must have been puzzled on the morrow when she smiled elsewhere to decide whether she was a superb actress without heart or depth of feeling, or the most capricious of mortals, quick to love and quick to forget.

[1] Strickland's *Life of Henrietta Maria.* [2] Sir Philip Warwick's *Memories.*

Here is Sir Toby's panegyric on this enchanting personage:

"She will freely discourse of love and hear both the fancies and powers of it, but if you will needs bring it within knowledge, and direct it to herself, she is likely to divert the discourse, or at least seem not to understand. By which you may know her humour, for since she cannot love in earnest she would have nothing from love, so contenteth herself to play with love as with a child. She hath too great a heart to have naturally any strong inclination to others. Though she be observed not to be careful in the public exercise of our religion, yet I agree not with the opinion that she is likely to change and abandon it. She is in disposition inclined to be choleric, which she suppresses in consideration that it is unhandsome towards herself, which yet, though thus covered, doth so kindle and fire her wit that in a few words it says somewhat so extracted as that it has a sharpness and strength and taste to disrelish if not to kill the proudest hopes which you can have of her value of you. She more willingly allows the conversation of men than women, yet when she is amongst those of her own sex her discourse is of fashion and dress, which she always had so perfect on herself."

Anne of Austria had set the fashion in what was called "honest gallantry." Lucy, Lady Carlisle, had all the graces and gifts, had all the talents and arts, and the capricious genius necessary to play the same part. One cannot be sure, however, that she had the necessary virtue to play with fire and escape unscathed.

Such was the lady who was credited with empire over the affections of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. But the gossip of the public is often wrong and is not any the more likely to be true because it has been preserved in footnotes to authentic history. Whatever the truth may be as to his relations with Lady Carlisle, Strafford was accustomed, at this time, to write to his wife letters that

impress one as breathing a spirit of sincere solicitude. While, if the Countess had ever loved him, she now, during the supreme crisis of his life, made no sign that she was moved by his peril.

The sun had risen high over London on the morning of the 22nd of March when unwonted commotion might be noticed within and without the Tower. Under the walls of the grim fortress a procession of barges lay at anchor. Five score hardy watermen lounged upon the shore or busied themselves on board their craft.

Seven o'clock chimed. Over the drawbridge swung a party of armed men, and in their midst a prisoner of lofty mien, garbed in deep mourning, one whose face and form were as familiar as those of the King himself. It was the Lord Strafford bound for Westminster Hall.

On this fresh spring morning, when the air filled men's hearts with the joy of living, his lordship was going out to be tried for his life. There was nothing singular in that early start with business so serious. London was so small that every man, great or small, slept within easy walk of his office, unless he slept over it, and the whole city hummed with activity at an hour when in modern days train and tram have not yet done carrying their myriads from their distant homes to the scene of their avocations. Parliament and the law-courts were, in this respect, governed by the general habits of the people. And judges and legislators usually commenced their day's work at an hour when the men who to-day fill their places are sitting down to breakfast.

Six barges, manned by fifty pairs of oars and carrying a hundred soldiers, escorted Strafford up the river to Westminster. The time had passed when he could escape if he would. Two hundred of the trained bands were drawn up on the bank-side to receive him when he stepped ashore and see him safely to the feet of his judges. It was a close-meshed net indeed.

From four o'clock in the morning the public, some curious, some bitter partisans, had been streaming towards the Palace of Westminster, to have their share in the spectacle that according to tradition accompanied a great man's downfall.

Westminster Hall had been specially prepared for the grim drama to be enacted there. The canopied throne for the King and Queen stood at the north end. By it was the chair of State for the young Prince of Wales. Before the throne were woolsacks for the judges, and before the judges sat the dukes in their black gowns.

The middle of the Hall was occupied by the general body of the peers in scarlet and ermine, while on either side, tier above tier, sat the Speaker and the whole Commons. Immediately behind the peers were placed the accusers, foremost amongst them Pym and Hampden. The tragedy had its vein of comedy. The Commons had stood out for the privilege of wearing their hats throughout the proceedings, until it was found that if the point were pressed until it had been adjusted to their satisfaction there would probably be no trial at all. The bishops were not present. The odour of blood was in the air and it was not for men of their calling to breathe it.

At the bar, between the peers and the accusers, was a desk for the prisoner. And thither now, escorted by his guards, carrying halberds and muskets, walked Strafford, wearing no ornament save his George suspended by a gold chain from his neck, while upon his bowed figure and set, stern face every eye was turned.

In the words of a contemporary it was, "The most glorious assembly the isle could afford," for there, besides the Royal family, the peerage and the representatives of the people, were the foreign ambassadors and all the great ladies of the land, and beauties of the Court, come to see the proud man brought to judgment. With routs and pageants they were familiar. With the excitement of the bear garden and the cockpits they were satiated. Men

and women, they were all accustomed to the sight of blood and of death. But they were resolved to lose none of this rare entertainment, such an entertainment as came hardly once in a generation. Most of the spectators had therefore taken the precaution to come prepared for a long session, carrying with them a collation and flasks well filled, and throughout the day they ate and drank, lest fasting should mar their enjoyment.[1]

Strafford bent his knee to the assembly. Then standing erect at the bar he heard the charge read, after which he was permitted to seat himself, and the great indictment begun.

Pym was chief prosecutor. As phrase by phrase was added to the indictment, Strafford must have felt that the scaffold was being built for him of oak clamped with iron. The Hall rung with invective. It was the wild eloquence of the days of revolution; no phrase was measured, no word chosen that might savour of restraint when one more damning could be thundered forth against him. And this man who cried for blood was once as his brother, and now the real King of England.

As the case proceeded Strafford awoke with a shock to the consciousness that the Strafford he knew was not the man here held up to the execration of his countrymen. He was a Yorkshire gentleman of ancient lineage and blest with broad domains who had risen to great power and high honours by dint of what he conceived to be loyal and worthy service to the King. He had been bold in council and in action. His models had been the men who had made nations subject to a single iron will.

But this Yorkshire gentleman, a patriot after his own fashion, did not know the England of his day slowly awakening, as she was, to a new conception of liberty. He had been born too late, or he had been born remote from his true country.

He had mounted high, piling success on success, garnering, when and how he might, the deserts of his great

[1] Baillie.

talents and industry and courage. As he had strode along towards the goal, bearing down all obstacles, crushing enemies, parting with friends, there had been little of good fellowship even in the days of his brightest prosperity, little of laughter. It was one swift chapter of great deeds, or so he had seen it.

But how differently did his enemies see it all! His great deeds were great crimes, his bold statecraft was lawlessness, his iron will tyranny at its best; at its worst, mean vindictiveness. The idle words of a proud man who often forgot he was only the King's subject were not forgotten during these evil days, and now were set against him with cruel ingenuity.

No wonder this man, so tragically alone in the midst of all these nobles and gentlemen and ladies who so recently should have shown him deference or turn their backs upon Whitehall, transformed by the agony of this perverse analysis of his public deeds, cried out in pain:

" . . . It is a conspiracy! " [1]

At which, says the chronicler, " Pym gave a great shout and desired the House to note what an injury he had done this Honourable House of Commons in calling them his malicious enemies."

The madness of wrath was followed by a sense of intense helplessness. His tongue, the tongue that had hushed his enemies so often, and of which he was so proud, was a traitor to him. It was time indeed that he began to doubt himself, and falling on his knees he begged them not to mistake him.

The wicked Earl on his knees! In these days it had grown to be a familiar position for this proudest noble in England.

Crowds every day watched Strafford come and go to the place of trial. But now that the man of iron was held captive, passion had given way to curiosity. In silence they watched the disembarkation from the barge and the

[1] Baillie's *State Trials*.

march of the trained bands with the prisoner to Westminster Hall. The tall bowed figure, the white austere face, towering above the guards, the mourning apparel, the gold chain and pendant George, symbols of departed greatness, subdued the gaping multitude.

On the 9th of April Westminster Hall was full. The trained bands awaited the prisoner. But he did not come. Instead, the Lieutenant of the Tower came and made oath that Strafford was ill. Then one Glyn, a colleague of Pym, protested it "was wilfulness" not illness that kept the Earl away. Someone animated by a spark of chivalry protested that even a traitor might be overcome by physical weakness. But Glyn would not hear of excuses. There was no time for Thomas Wentworth to be ill when the axe was almost ready for him, its edge as finely tempered as any apostle of liberty, or red champion of tyranny, need wish for.

The man who completed Strafford's destruction was Sir Henry Vane. Strafford, with his usual indifference to the feelings of others, had taken as one of his titles that of the "Baron Raby." Vane had marked down that title for himself when the day of his elevation should come.[1] But though Strafford had ten thousand baronies to pick and choose from he would not leave the lordship of Raby to the man to whose family the manor belonged. Through Vane secrets of the Privy Council were made known which went to show that Strafford had contemplated using his Irish army against the English people.

On the 13th of April the prisoner spoke in his own defence. His life was at stake. For two hours he held forth, saying what he could to avert his doom. If technical arguments were to prevail his speech would have sufficed perhaps to save him. If indeed his fate rested with his peers he might have escaped. But the real judges were the Commons. And behind the Commons were the people goaded to wrath not by taxation, not by corruption, not

[1] Clarendon's *Rebellion*.

by the King's incapacity, but by the muzzling of Parliament for long years.

"My lords," concluded the prisoner, "I have now troubled your lordships a great deal longer than I should have done were it not for the interest of those pledges that a saint in heaven left me—"

Here words failed him. His memory was back in the days of his youth when Margaret Clifford was still his companion.[1] Tears were in his eyes and in his voice. A hush fell upon the court. All there had heard the gossip to which reference has already been made, and which laid to his account an unpremeditated blow, struck in passion, which sent wife and child to the tomb. Some said his tears were signs of remorse.[2] But those with a deeper insight into human nature, those indisposed to accept as truth the words of every scandal-monger, may have been content to attribute his emotion to the flood-tide of tender hopes and joys conjured up from the brilliant promising past, when this end had never been foreseen even in his darkest dreams. Once again he essayed to speak. It was to beg that his children might not be beggared according to the cruel fulness of the law of treason because their father was to die.

"What I forfeit for myself," he said, "is nothing. But I confess that my indiscretions should forfeit for them, it wounds very deeply. . . . Something I should have said, but I see I shall not be able, and therefore I will leave it. . . . I do submit myself clearly and freely unto your judgment, and whether that righteous judgment shall be life in death, 'In te Domine, confido: non confundar in æternum.'"

The process was by Bill of Attainder, and the Bill had to pass Commons, Lords and King, so that each should bear the responsibility of blood.

Its passage through the two Houses was never in doubt. Strafford's only hope lay in his master's constancy.

[1] Robert Baillie's *State Trials*. [2] *Ibid.*

But his master failed him.

Eager to save Strafford, but still more eager to save himself, the King threw his servant to the wolves.

Howling mobs surrounded Whitehall yelling for the Earl's head. Henrietta Maria, terrified by the clamour of the rabble, is accused of having pleaded with the King to resign Strafford to his enemies lest not only the Earl but all of them should be lost.[1] Of the secret conferences of the devoted wife and husband during these anxious days the world knew nothing. While the throne rocked beneath them, while they trembled for themselves and their children, while they turned over a thousand projects for helping their friend in distress, the Earl himself came to their succour.

Strafford heard in the Tower some echo of the strife that raged round Whitehall and wrote begging the King to sign the Bill of Attainder. And Charles accepted the sacrifice, hoping that the consequences of his action would in some way be averted. While the town was still in an uproar the Royal family gathered in Whitehall Chapel to see the little Princess Royal, then a child of ten, betrothed to the Prince of Orange, a boy of eleven. An occasion so joyous might have been expected to move the people and Parliament to pity. But the tide of hostility flowed unabated. The star of Strafford's good fortune had suffered total eclipse. Charles wrote to the Lords appealing for mercy for his fallen servant. But mercy there was none at Westminster. Courage there was none at Whitehall.

On the morning of the 12th of May 1641, at dawn of day, multitudes of men and women streamed towards Tower Hill, for this day was Strafford to die, and it would be a sight to talk of to their children and their children's children. A stranger might have thought that an enemy was advancing on London, as the waves of people opened now and again to clear a passage for the advance of

[1] Strickland's *Life of Henrietta Maria.*

LUCY, COUNTESS OF CARLISLE

AFTER THE PAINTING BY VAN DYKE AT WINDSOR

columns of infantry surging along through the Strand and Fleet Street and Cheapside to Tower Hill to keep the ground for the executioner. Cavalry followed in their wake. If Strafford had friends who thought of taking any desperate step on his behalf the serried ranks of horse and foot, armed to the teeth, would surely teach them prudence.

When all was ready for the last scene there were, it is said, one hundred thousand people gathered round the block.

In a room overlooking the path to eternity the aged Archbishop of Canterbury, for long his companion in power, was confined. As Strafford passed he looked up and exclaimed:

"My lord, your prayers and your blessing!"

Laud had never thought to see such a day. He raised his hands to bless the condemned man, but, overcome, he fell in a swoon. But Strafford could not tarry. What he willed was of less account than that of the meanest churl who had come there from the slums of Whitefriars or Westminster for the morning's sport. At the scaffold they awaited him.

"Farewell, my lord!" he exclaimed. "May God protect your innocency!"

And then Strafford appeared before the multitude more bowed, more careworn than when they had seen him day by day at Westminster Hall. But proudly he looked on the rabble as though he had an army at his heels and would give it a gallant lead on this last, the most forlorn, of all forlorn hopes. The Lieutenant of the Tower desired him to take coach lest the people should tear him to pieces.[1]

"No," he answered proudly, "I dare look death in the face, and I hope the people too. Have you a care that I do not escape, and I care not how I die, whether by the hand of the executioner or the fury of the people. If that may give them better content it is all one to me."

[1] *Life of Strafford.*

On the scaffold his brother George awaited him, weeping silently. A reproach, half serious, half playful, entirely affectionate, was given him for his tears.

For Will and Anne and Arabella, and his infant still in its mother's arms, he had a blessing. To his wife and his sister he sent his love. To his son an admonition to serve his country and, mindful of how near the highest place is ever to the lowest, to aim at no high preferments. A father's words of wisdom purchased with his blood!

Then the Earl took off his doublet, wound up his hair and put on a white cap. For a moment he knelt in prayer. Then settling himself on the block he signalled with his hand to the executioner, and the deed was done. Thomas Wentworth was no more. The born aristocrat had taken a turn with death and had acquitted himself with as much grace and ease and courage as any son of liberty. If Charles Stuart had really loved him he would never forget that hour. If Lucy Carlisle had ever loved him she, too, had failed him utterly; and King and lady and Parliament may well have marvelled when all was over that the mighty Strafford, so long the master of armies, so long the master of them all, should have been so easily despatched.

CHAPTER VII

THE KING'S LAST ADIEUX TO HIS CHILDREN

THREE troopers rode up late one evening through Holborn, and drawing rein at the Blue Boar Inn, where the Inns of Court Hotel now stands, dismounted to enjoy its far-famed hospitality. A close observer might have discerned at a glance that though all three were equipped as common troopers, they did not meet on terms of perfect equality. The two who were seemingly equals made themselves cosy in the inn with mugs of foaming ale to cheer their converse, while the third man lounged without at the wicket, but whether awaiting the pleasure of his comrades or merely cooling his brow in the night air, or fulfilling some deeper purpose, a stranger could not tell.[1]

The evening wore on. The troopers within sipped their beer while the fellow outside kept watch, or pondered perchance the vicissitudes of a soldier's life in those days when England was England's deadliest foe, and King and Parliament were in death grips.

Citizens came and drank their ale and went their ways, or tarried to smoke a pipe and play at backgammon, or throw dice, while gossiping warily of the doings betwixt Crown and Commons—whether Cromwell or Fairfax or Prince Rupert was the better general, and who would gain and who lose in the final settlement.

Suddenly the two troopers left their tankards, and, obedient to a summons from their comrade at the gate, joined him there. It was strange if host and guests did not think their demeanour a little curious. But those

[1] Timbs's *Romance of London.*

were days when curiosity was a dangerous vice, and if curious they were, they suppressed the feeling, or gratified it without arousing the ire or obstructing the business of the military visitors.

From the inn stables a courier emerged leading a horse equipped, as was its master, for a journey, though the hour was late for taking to the road in times so hazardous.

At the wicket he halted, his progress barred by three drawn swords.

There was a subdued but stern exchange of words. The troopers ungirt the saddle, carried it to the stables, where by the light of a lantern they ripped open one of its skirts, took from out the rent a letter, and then returned the saddle to its owner. Their business was done. Now he might take the road—to the devil if he pleased. Thankful to escape with such slight discourtesy from such company, he re-saddled his horse and rode away on the long rough road to Dover.

The troopers that had drunk at the Blue Boar and then rifled the courier's saddle were, it is said, Cromwell and Ireton and an orderly. A spy in the King's household had, so the story runs, betrayed the fact that the King was sending an important letter to the Queen, who long before had taken leave for ever of her husband and fled to France. The courier knew nothing of the precious despatch sewn up in his saddle, and when the troopers had insisted on searching it he acquiesced with a light heart, confident that disappointment would attend their pains. It was, however, far otherwise.

The letter, it is said, was a declaration of the King's policy in the supreme crisis that had now overtaken him. In it he informed Her Majesty that he would "close with the Scots," and thus destroy his enemies in England. That was enough. The King was at the time a prisoner in the hands of the Parliament. Negotiations more or less informal, negotiations of which no minute was ever

penned lest the note should some day be used to destroy the authors, were in progress. But the King's letter to his consort warned the greatest of the Roundheads that parley with Charles Stuart was a dangerous policy, that England was no longer big enough to hold them both.

The letter decided Cromwell. He resolved to work for the ruin of the King.

It was in December 1648 that Charles was brought up from Hirst Castle to Windsor, from the worst of the Royal homes to the most splendid of them. London and the neighbourhood was flooded with troops, and Westminster Abbey itself became a barracks.

Then in January, London was ready for him who had ceased to be its master. Charles returned to town, returned to tread the path that Strafford had followed a few years before.

They did not dare, however, to send Charles to the Tower. St James's Palace became his prison, and an insecure prison-house it was. Whitehall, still the home of many friends of the Royal cause, was but a little way off. And the courts and alleys of Westminster, close by, were crowded with bullies and tatterdemalions, scores of whom would sooner or later reach the gallows, and all of whom were ready to hazard their lives in any enterprise, however desperate, that put a crown in their pockets.

Some of these dangerous slums opened into the main thoroughfares of King Street and Moore Street, along which ran the direct route from Whitehall or St James's to Westminster Palace. Two famous gates, one at the Westminster end, the other at the Charing Cross end, gave admission to Whitehall. The former was called The King Street gate, the latter the Holbein. The space now covered by Trafalgar Square was then built over with mews, and adjacent was Spring Gardens, a private pleasure resort. A street led from Charing Cross to the Holbein Gate, a castellated structure with coveted apartments above the deep archway. A broad roadway led from

here to the King Street Gate, a structure of similar design. To the left hand, as one passed along the roadway, the palace of Whitehall and the banqueting-house rose above the Royal Gardens. To the right was the Tilt-yard and Cockpit. Union Street was entered from King Street, and in Union Street was the High Gate of the courtyard of Westminster Palace.

Such were the main features of the locality in which the great drama now impending was to be enacted.

The House of Commons passed an ordinance for the erection of a High Court to try the Sovereign, and one hundred and thirty-five persons were named to constitute the Court. Charles's fate was no longer in doubt. The verdict of the Commons was already registered in their hearts, and any man who heard them speak might read it. Lord Fairfax and other gentlemen convinced of this, and satisfied that they could do nothing to save the Monarch's life, retired, leaving him entirely in the hands of his enemies.

All London was early astir on the morning of the 20th of January 1649. For the first time in history an English King was to be tried for his misdeeds by a court which was half a court-martial. All the approaches to Westminster Hall were held by troops, upon whom the crowds pressed in their desire to see the spectacle of a King going to his condemnation. But the war-dogs of the Parliament were at their posts, seasoned warriors, careless of what the mob might attempt, for had they not held their own against the flower of England's chivalry!

"God save Your Majesty! God save Your Majesty!" cried the dark masses of people, the King's neighbours from the adjoining slums, and now his only friends.[1] But a serried line of Ironsides rose between Charles and his humble sympathisers, and with their partisans these granite-souled warriors beat back the rabble, accompanying their blows with cries of "Justice! Justice! Execution!"

[1] Strickland's *Life of Henrietta Maria.*

When the King entered Westminster Hall the body of the Court was packed with people, while along one side to maintain order was drawn up a force of military, armed with muskets, and prepared to use them should the need arise. Undismayed, however, by the grizzled warriors who frowned upon them, the heroes of many a hard-fought field, the spectators were overcome with emotion on beholding their hunted Sovereign at last brought to bay, and again and again they interrupted the proceedings with cries of:

"God save the King!"

From day to day during the course of the trial the same popular demonstrations of sympathy were witnessed, while every day saw defections from the ranks of the Commissioners in whose hands was the King's life. On the last day only forty-nine members appeared. Some were afraid to do so. Some dared not, at the last, take any responsibility for the final act of the tragedy. Had these waverers but possessed a heart as stout as a masked lady who sat in one of the galleries, the fate of Charles Stuart had been different.

As the clerk read over the names of the members of the Commission, this mysterious spectator indulged in a running commentary.[1]

"Lord Fairfax!" demanded the clerk.

"Not such a fool as to come here to-day," was the shrill response from the masked figure above.

The same voice dubbed Cromwell "a rogue and a traitor."

When the President declared that the King was brought to account by the people of England, the same daring interrupter cried out:

"It is false. Not one half of them."

By this time the audience was wildly excited, and it was necessary the lady in the mask should be silenced if the trial was to proceed with any semblance of order.

[1] *State Trials*, vol. iv.

According to one account, Colonel Axtell, the commander of the troops, called upon his men to fire.

When the day came that Colonel Axtell had to answer for his share in the proceedings, he flatly denied this accusation.

"I said not any such word or anything like it," protested Axtell. "I heard there was an officer went up and entreated the lady to be silent."

At all events the troops did not fire, and the masked lady, who was none other than Lady Fairfax, one of the breed of the fighting Veres, retired.

"God save the King! God save the King!" cried the excited people, and in the midst of the commotion the King was doomed to the axe.

The Prince of Wales was safe in France. So, too, was the Duke of York. But the Princess Elizabeth and the little Duke of Gloucester were at Sion House, Brentford, in the hands of the enemies of their family. Elizabeth was but twelve when on the 29th of January she was carried into London with her brother to take farewell of the condemned man. In her own childish words let her describe the last farewells at St James's Palace.[1]

"He told me," says the Princess, "he was glad I was come, for though he had not time to say much, yet somewhat he wished to say to me which he could not to another, and he feared that the cruelty was too great to permit his writing. 'But, sweetheart,' he added, 'thou wilt forget what I tell thee.'

"I told him," continues the Princess, "I would write down all he said to me. He wished me, he said, not to grieve and lament myself for him, for it was a glorious death he should die, it being for the laws and religion of the land. . . . He had forgiven all his enemies, and he hoped God would forgive them also; and he commanded us and all the rest of my brothers and sisters to forgive them also.

[1] Strickland's *Life of Henrietta Maria.*

" Above all, he bade me tell my mother that his thoughts had never strayed from her, that his love for her would be the same to the last; withal he commanded me (and my brother) to love her and be obedient to her. He desired me not to grieve for him, for he should die a martyr, and that he doubted not but God would restore the throne to his son; that then we should be all happier than we could possibly have been if he had lived."

Then it was Gloucester's turn.

" Heed, my child, what I say. They will perhaps cut off my head and perhaps make thee a King. But you must not be a King as long as your brothers live; therefore I charge you do not be made a King by them."

Gloucester answered like a prince while his heart burst with sorrow.

" I will be torn in pieces first," was the child's pledge of his loyalty.

The King kissed and blessed his sobbing children and then let them go. But as they passed through the door, and before it could close upon them for ever, he would gratify once more the hunger of his heart with the solace of their innocent lips. Obedient to their father's last wish they ran to his arms and once more was repeated the agony of parting. Again and again he strained his children to his heart, kissing and caressing them, and with floods of tears they all suffered again the excruciating agony of farewell. Had his enemies but seen that leave-taking, the hardest of them would perhaps have been melted to pity. The scalding tears that rained down the captive's cheeks, the sighs that burst from his heaving bosom, would perhaps have erased his sins and redeemed his life. But the ancient walls of St James's alone looked upon that tableau emblematic of the most exquisite human misery.

At last the moment came when those young hearts, the adored complements of his own, should never beat again upon the King's bosom, when in mercy to the children he should bid them go. Then he fell on his

knees broken-hearted, crushed, the last spark of pride extinguished within him, the last shred of Royal assumption fallen from him. And thus prostrate in the posture of supplication, of abasement, of dumb despair, Henry and Elizabeth beheld their father for the last time, then vanished from his sight for ever.

CHAPTER VIII

A RIOT IN THE STRAND AND WHAT CAME OF IT

CHARLES was dead, and in the new chief of the Royalist cause no defect could be found save that he was his father's son and would wear his crown.

But while the rights of the exiled Prince of Wales were but the rights of his race, one with a stronger, a more mysterious claim, had first to be served. Young Charles was a Stuart, his father's son. Cromwell was from Nature, the envoy of Destiny, with precedence over all.

This Huntingdon farmer took possession not only of the insignia of power but likewise became his own Prime Minister. It may be doubted if throughout the land there was a single man who entertained any feeling of affection for the new ruler of the country. To the soldiers he was the mainstay of their ascendancy. But he was their servant as well as their master. It was not so much to Oliver they were loyal as to that invincible sword of his, which decimated the ungodly and the idolater and laid every enemy in the dust.

Thus it came to pass that when in a little time the way was clear for the great triumph of which Oliver had so long dreamt, it was his soldiers that thwarted him. The Crown was within his grasp. Beside it was the Sceptre. The Throne was empty; but one step forward and it was his. He would be King. But so far and no further was the mandate of his troopers. He dare not assume the Crown, and he who had marched from victory to victory in Scotland and England, from stronghold to stronghold in Ireland, dare not disobey these terrible saints. Charles

Stuart might as well have lived. Crown and Throne and Sceptre were not for him.

But if he was not King in name, there never was a sovereign who gripped more firmly the reins of power. Beset with enemies at home, without a friend abroad, the iron hand was immovable. A saint himself, he allowed the saints to smother laughter throughout England and wrap the land in a mantle of gloom.

Cromwell as Lord Protector was head of the social life of the kingdom. But Whitehall was now the dullest Court that England had ever seen.

If beauty was willing to come here to adorn the ancient *salons* Cromwell would have none of them, and the gallant fellows of easy manners and easy morals who had made the place brilliant with wit and mirth and the animation of bubbling life and valour in the days of Charles, were either dead and gone or hiding their heads in seclusion beyond the seas. There was high thinking and high and austere deeds, but laughter there was none in this Court where troopers and preachers had succeeded to the places of Court gallants and Court coquettes.

In Cromwell's nature there were two tender attributes, and two only. One was his love for his children. Music was the other. The trooper's rugged soul melted, it is said, when the organ rolled forth its wondrous waves of melody, speaking to his soul with its thousand voices a language that subdued and thrilled, a language sweet and incomprehensible, but irresistible to the warrior-mystic.

Cromwell probably found little sympathy in the home circle. Elizabeth Boucher was an excellent wife for a farmer. But this man was a born prince, and princely Elizabeth could never be. When they dined alone she cut a capon in two because its flavour was thus improved.[1] That way too made money go twice as far. The war with Spain made Spanish imports so dear that Whitehall knew not the luxury of an orange. The Protector always

[1] *The Court and Kitchen of Elizabeth Cromwell.*

liked oranges with veal. One day there was veal for dinner, but not in the companionship in which the Lord Protector liked to see it. In the bitterness of disillusionment he asked why his devoted Elizabeth had failed him. And Elizabeth, with provincial honesty that sounded very strange in the home of the Stuarts, where of old the highest truth was that which pleased the King, declared that she could not afford to gratify His Highness's extravagant whims, that even a crab-orange cost a groat. He should have thought of his digestion, she added, before drawing his too-ready sword against the fair land whence came the fruit he loved.

A story that tickled the bloods of the town at the expense of the Lady Protectress was told of her dealings with a countrywoman. This industrious and enterprising cottager tramped into the capital with some green peas, the choicest product of her little garden. On the way she had an offer for the vegetables, but she would not sell. Her destination was Whitehall. She would be proud for ever if the head of the realm was nourished with the fruit of her own husbandry. Moreover, in these hard times, there was one place at least where the sun of prosperity shone, where gold flowed in a copious stream, and that was Whitehall! Out of that noble stream something good to look upon would assuredly find its way into her empty but capacious pocket.

Full of hope she passed the guards and trudged up to the palace door. A maid took the peas and carried them to her mistress. The heart of Elizabeth Boucher swelled with pleasure. It was good to be Protectress of a realm where green peas were thrust upon one, and in her munificence she sent a crown to the countrywoman. But the good wife nearly choked with wrath at so meagre a reward and demanded back her vegetables saying she could have had five shillings more at the Savoy from a common cook. Her Highness took the woman at her word and returned the peas, saying she could not afford such a luxury.

Hitherto there had been one law for the rich, another for the poor. Cromwell changed all that so far as it was possible to do so. In the English courts the law was administered with an iron hand, law that was steeped in blood, but was at least free from the worst corruptions of monarchical days, when birth and breeding often enjoyed the benefit of a totally different code to that under which the meaner criminal was punished.

In the winter of 1653 an event occurred which gave singular proof of the quality of this new Lord of Whitehall who could not afford an orange at his dinner lest bankruptcy should overtake the Treasury. There came to England, in the suite of the Portuguese Ambassador, his brother, Don Pantaleon Sa, a youth of high spirit and brilliant prospects, beloved of his own people, to whom a term of residence in the English capital would seem to offer many advantages.

A favourite promenade in London of the period was the New Exchange in the Strand. It corresponded in some degree to the Burlington Arcade of our own day, whither the latest finery attracted the ladies, while the ladies attracted the beaux of the town. Nor were the customers always the fairest belles of the place, for the milliners and seamstresses had often beauty enough to win the hearts of men of rank and fortune.

Don Pantaleon and an English friend, strolling through this place one November day, came into collision with a Mr Gerrard, who accused the former of speaking disparagingly of England. Don Pantaleon could speak no English, but the wrangle proceeded in French, the foreigner, according to his own account, being grossly insulted.[1] The quarrel was taken up by partisans. Don Pantaleon was not armed. But after the fashion of the day most of the gentlemen wore swords, and were quick to use them even on the most slender provocation. They imagined that they now had excuse enough for doing so, and Gerrard

[1] Don Pantaleon Sa's *Narrative.*

was wounded in a fierce encounter. One of the Portuguese was also wounded. But this was not the end of the matter.

Had Don Pantaleon been a discreet fellow he would have avoided the Exchange until the affair had been forgotten. But unhappily he was too proud to act discreetly lest he should be accused of cowardice. Under the best circumstances the foreigner was more or less an object of contempt to the London gallant. In Don Pantaleon's case the risk he now ran was intensified by the fact that he was conceived to have done grievous injury to an Englishman. Nothing would do him, however, but to take a walk as usual in the Exchange on the following evening. Some fifty of his followers chose to betake themselves at the same time to the popular rendezvous, all heavily armed and wearing, it is said, coats of mail.

The bloods of the town, eager for sport, had doubtless anticipated some such muster of the enemy. In a twinkling pandemonium reigned in the Exchange. The shopkeepers ran out to put up their shutters and barricade their doors. Ladies fled screaming in all directions, while, to complete the confusion and terror of peaceable visitors to the place, a pistol-shot was fired on the stairs leading to the floor above.

Amongst the panic-stricken crowd was a Mr Greenaway walking with his sister and his *fiancée*. Having obtained shelter for the ladies, he went to watch the riot. His *fiancée* never again saw him alive. The Portuguese are said to have mistaken him for Gerrard and to have murdered him at sight.

By this time crowds had come thronging from the Strand to the scene of the mêlée, and if the foreigners were not to pay a terrible price for their temerity the time had come to beat a retreat.

With the townspeople in full cry after them, they retired to the Portuguese Embassy, locked the gates and prepared for a siege. But news of the commotion had

now passed Charing Cross and reached the ears of Cromwell in Whitehall. The man who had established order in three kingdoms by drowning disorder in seas of blood was little troubled that the kinsman even of an ambassador should invite rough usage. Short and sharp were the orders he gave. The Embassy was Portuguese territory, but if the King of Portugal would keep it sacred in an emergency such as this he would need to surround it with such an army as never before had crossed the main.

The Horse Guards were turned out, and away they clattered through the crowded thoroughfares to the Embassy. Colonel Whaley was in command, and he demanded that the offenders should be surrendered.[1] The Ambassador declined, and, defending his action on the sanction of the law of nations, asked for time to send to Whitehall that he might lay the matter before Cromwell. To this Whaley consented.

Towards the close of that drear November day the ambassador of the Ambassador arrived at Whitehall, and, taking a lofty tone, complained of the injury done his master. Cromwell's answer was a master-stroke of diplomacy. If, he said, the criminals were not given up the soldiers would be withdrawn and then "the people would pull down the house and execute justice themselves."

Cromwell's answer may not have been seriously intended. To permit a foreign embassy to be sacked and its inmates murdered was a violation of the canons of civilization at which even the Lord Protector might hesitate. If it was meant merely to frighten the Ambassador it served its purpose to the letter. Preferring the forms of law to the rough justice of the mob, the Ambassador surrendered his brother, who was duly arraigned for murder.

At first Pantaleon declined to plead, on the ground that he was a member of the Embassy. He was then threatened

[1] Timbs' *Romance of London*.

with a frightful death. According to the law of England a prisoner who would not plead was pressed to death. This terrible punishment was by no means uncommon and was generally inflicted at the press yard at Newgate. The condemned man was laid on his back, and on his body was placed a great weight of iron, which was gradually increased. On the first day he was given three morsels of bread. On the second a little water, and these on alternate days was his only diet until death released him.

Little wonder, therefore, that Don Pantaleon preferred to put his life to the hazard of a trial rather than court so dreadful a doom. He pleaded "not guilty," but he and four of his companions were sentenced to be hanged. The most strenuous efforts were made to move Cromwell to mercy. But Cromwell was flint to their petitions. His only concession was that the axe should despatch the murderer instead of the rope.

Meanwhile a rather grim solace was offered to Pantaleon on his road to eternity. Gerrard had become involved in a plot to assassinate Cromwell. He, too, was condemned to die. In his case, likewise, mercy was shown to the extent of handing him over to the headsman instead of to the hangman, and on Tower Hill the gentleman who had started the commotion in the New Exchange was hurried into eternity, just before the Portuguese grandee who, coming to England to see the world and fit himself for high office in his own land, thus came to an inglorious end.

A man who would yield nothing to conciliate enemies at home or allies abroad, when enemies were legion and allies few, should have a thousand eyes to guide his shrewd wit and indomitable will. Alone, in some sense, against the world, Cromwell organized a secret service such as England had never before known, had never before needed. His spies were everywhere, at home and abroad, in council, city and camp. Once he gave a gentleman leave to travel

abroad on condition that he did not see the exiled Prince. When the traveller returned he boasted of having kept his word. Cromwell admitted he had done so, but the reason he had not broken it was because he had seen the Prince in a darkened room.

The dread of assassination constantly haunted him. He moved every few nights from one bedroom to another. Every door was studded with locks. No wonder that in the end his nerve failed him. He had built deep and broad and high. But he had built in vain. There was no one to follow him. The House of Cromwell would never be forgotten in the long story of English rulers, but to keep its fame alive there would be the deeds of no other save the first and last of the line, the founder of the dynasty—its fulfilment.

Ill-health stole upon him, sapping his vitality, until the great captain, the ruthless despot, was a physical wreck, who, in utter weariness of spirit, felt that the end of the race was approaching, that his forced marches to glory had all been made, made perhaps in vain, and that in the future no fresh laurels could adorn his brow.

The best-beloved of all his children was Lady Elizabeth Claypole. One August day in 1658 they called him to her chamber to see her die. The Cæsar who had faced death a thousand times, who had flooded the market-places at Wexford and at Drogheda with the blood of innocent children, shrivelled up with sorrow by his daughter's death-bed.

"I cannot bear it! I cannot bear it, O God!" cried the great man in an agony of revolt.

But rebellion was in vain. In the day of his strength and pride he had smitten and known no pity. Just nine years before Charles Stuart had pressed his last kisses on the lips of his children. Now he, his destroyer, was to learn with horror what it was to plead to the winds. His wife was at his side, and she who had never stood upon a battle-field, she who hated the sword and bloodshed,

received with courage the blow that desolated the warrior's heart.

Elizabeth's death dissolved as it were the very foundations of his being. The country whither Elizabeth had fled was now the best, the dearest refuge he could hope for, and on the 3rd of September 1658, his lucky day, the day of Dunbar, the day of Worcester, he lay down and died.

CHAPTER IX

"THE NINE DAIES WONDER"

"A country lass (brown as a berry,
Blithe of blee, in heart as merry;
Cheeks well fed, and sides well larded;
Every bone, with fat flesh guarded),
Meeting merry Kemp by chance,
Was Marian in his Morrice dance."

LONDON at the beginning of the seventeenth century contained probably no more than half a million people. Fifty years later there had certainly been but slight addition to this number. War and pestilence and Royal restrictions upon the growth of the capital tended to check the natural development of the city. The ordinary death-rate must have been enormous at a time when the laws of sanitation as now understood were quite unknown, and when the poor, ill-nourished and ill-clad, were herded together in vile dens, the fruitful breeding-places of devastating disease. Added to all this, lives were sacrificed to the law in untold numbers and for the most venial offences; often, too, on evidence which in strict justice ought not to have hanged a dog. Mercy was the virtue of the few; the heart of the multitude was flint to human misery and suffering. Human life in the eyes of the law had its value within the circle of the aristocracy, and in a rather less degree within that of the upper classes generally. But amongst the poor, above all as between gentleman and churl, it had little or none.

But England and above all, London, took life merrily, and in a sturdy, rugged fashion, lightly too. The char-

acter of a people does not change quickly. And the better to portray the boisterously-happy temperament of the humble folk who toiled early and late for little more than bite and sup and shelter, a scene may here be introduced which, though occurring earlier in the century.[1] is a faithful reflection of the manners and customs of the whole period.

Merrie England had passed through dark and evil days when William Kemp performed his dance which was regarded as a "Nine Daies Wonder." Through times as dark, as evil, it passed later in the century. But the people seem to have taken fair and foul with dogged and courageous cheerfulness. Life was cheap and precarious, and at the best short and hard, and they would extract from it whatever of enjoyment they could and leave the rest.

It was in this spirit the people thronged one February morning to the heart of the city, mustering right under the Lord Mayor's windows to see what was in some sense the Marathon of their day.

In the mind's eye one obtains an accurate picture of this bustling seventeenth-century London teeming with bright-faced thousands if one conjures up a city of narrow streets lined with picturesque overhanging houses built mainly of wood, with St Paul's towering above all. Outside the city limits were gardens and fields, mansions and villas and villages. Spitalfields and Moorfields were what their names signified. Shoreditch was a village with a parish church. Clerkenwell was a favourite neighbourhood with the aristocracy. Turning westwards past Fleet Street, the Strand was but a rural highway, skirted with mansions standing in their own grounds, and here and there a rude shanty where the poor man reared his humble abode under the protection of some gentleman's walls. Lincoln's Inn Fields were really fields, and beyond the suburban villas of Holborn and their terraced gardens

[1] Kemp's *Nine Daies Wonder.*

the open country stretched away to the north. Covent Garden, famous later for its coffee-houses, had its cluster of town-houses with Drury Lane Theatre close by. But beyond Charing Cross to the westward was, just like the region to the north, open country dotted over with the palatial homes of the nobility.

Of Westminster, with its Royal palaces, its beautiful park in which James I. hunted the deer, its venerable abbey, its homes of courtiers, commoners and peers, a glimpse has already been obtained. From out its streets and squares, its low alleys and courts, men and women had doubtless poured this crisp winter's morning to share with their neighbours of the city the fun of the spectacle afforded by Will Kemp, a well-known comedian, who deserting the stage for the road was now starting his famous Morrice dance from London to Norwich.

The good-humoured crowd of apprentices and mechanics, shopkeepers and merchants, cut-purses and rascals of all description, with a leavening, no doubt, of persons of finer quality, opened a passage through their ranks for the dancer. And while the tabourer put all his heart into his music Kemp skipped away through London town with his face to the east, the bells with which he was hung tinkling blithely a silvern cascade of melody.

Thousands lined the road and many more followed as he danced along through Whitechapel and on to Bow, the well-to-do as he passed flinging coins in his path, which lightened the way for the dancer, and lightening it needed, for roads in those days were little better than the fields which lay adjacent, and the more they were used the worse they were apt to be. As Kemp capered along, coins in a regular harvest fell before him. With a servant in his train, and a musician to play for him, and perhaps one or two patrons following on horseback, possibly with a financial interest in the venture, one cannot imagine Kemp halting in his dance to garner from the roadside the tribute of the populace, like some vagabond minstrel. This

agreeable duty was no doubt performed by one of the great man's suite.

At Bow, Kemp rested. The people crowded after him into the inn, those with money in their pockets eager to buy a mug of ale for the dancer. As they pressed their hospitality upon him, Kemp was not so weary that he could forbear to jest, scattering phrases in which, with something of a Shakespearean flavour, as became an actor who had won approval as a grave-digger in *Hamlet*, he blended thanks with banter.

"Truly, sir, I dare not," he said to one.

"Kind thanks," to another and another.

"It stands not with the congruity of my health," to another.

While still they pressed him it was "Farewell, Bow!" Then to the tabourer, "Tickle, good Tom! I'll follow thee."[1]

And Tom tickled with the more spirit because he, too, doubtless had been refreshed, and with hero-worshippers still following they came to Stratford Langton. Here a bear-baiting had been arranged to do him honour, and doubtless to bring profit to somebody. But Kemp could not tarry. His heels were light. The road was long. And the crowds were so great he did not even see the fight as he passed. But he could hear the bears roar and the dogs growl, and still dancing he came to Ilford.

"He has need of a long spoon that eats with the devil," is Kemp's comment on the hospitality of Ilford, where he gave a number of boon companions the slip, leaving them to their carouses that he might keep his own "little wit dry."

From Ilford by moonlight he set forward, "dancing within a quarter of a mile of Romford; where, in the high-way, two strong jades, having belike some quarrel to me unknown, were beating and biting of each other; and such, through God's help, was my good hap that I escaped their

[1] *The Nine Daies Wonder.*

hoofs, both being raised with their project above my head, like two smiths over one anvil."

At Romford he rested for two days, the people of the neighbourhood thronging to his inn to pay him homage, while, to add to the landlord's happiness, gay Londoners came in great numbers to offer the cup of kindness to the guest of honour. A touch of vanity may perhaps have tempted Kemp to rest so long, for when the tabour sounded on Wednesday morning, it being a market-day at Romford, he had an audience drawn from far and near.

Not all, however, who followed Kemp were enthusiasts for either art or sport. At Brentwood some pick-pockets plied their trade amongst the country folk. Two of them were taken by the officers and sent to gaol. Two others "had the charity of the town, and after a dance of trenchmore at the whipping-post they were sent back to London."

In the evening, Kemp, feeling rested, and attracted by the loveliness of the night, once more ordered his tabourer to strike up a tune, and with the moon to light his way he danced over the road to Ingerstone, followed by a couple of score of people.

At Witford Bridge, on the way to Chelmsford, Sir Thomas Mildmay and a number of ladies and gentlemen assembled to see him pass. And here we learn for the first time that the actor who had earned fame in *Hamlet* was also a merchant, and that his dance was something of a commercial enterprise. It was for this reason, doubtless, that he had chosen East Anglia for his performance. Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk were the most prosperous counties in the land and the most thickly populated. Their proximity to the large populations of London and Westminster encouraged agriculture and such industries as spinning and weaving. But from this it must not be inferred that these counties resembled in any degree in the seventeenth century their present appearance, smiling as they are with the perfection of the husbandman's art. On the contrary, they were for the most part one vast scene

of desolation, with miles and miles of swamp and morass and moorland, and only here and there a stretch of fertile country where wheat or barley or rye or beans were cultivated. Lean kine and sheep browsed on hungry pastures. Hamlets of mud and wood were hidden away in the shelter of woodland and vale. But the people of these hamlets were the busiest in the land. Their harvests found a ready market in London. White bread never crossed their lips. That was for the wealthy townsfolk. They were grateful for rye and barley bread and oat-cake. And when the fields did not need them the people were busy spinning yarn for the stuffs made by their weavers.

Amidst these simple peasant-folk Kemp doubtless plied a roaring trade with the wares which the mariners of many lands had brought to the Thames, and which to them were absolutely novel, never perhaps to be seen again, since the great majority of them would never take more than a journey of a few hours from their own hearths.

Gloves and garters and laces and ribbons were some of the dancer's most superior merchandise. In these the gentry dealt. But for plainer folk with little to spend, there were doubtless cheap trifles made in London or imported from abroad, trifles made by industrious seamstresses and mechanic artists at a time when machinery and large factories were still undreamt of.

At Chelmsford Kemp was too weary to ruffle it amongst the crowds that poured into the streets to welcome him. He made for his inn with all haste, and was glad to lock himself in his room. But he could not afford to play hide-and-seek altogether with fame. As an actor he had perhaps learned that if you fly from the public, the public end by flying from you. So he graciously went to the window and held forth from the comfort of that sheltered tribune, thanking them for their appreciation.

During his stay at Chelmsford a fever of dancing seized

the neighbourhood. All Essex went mad on the morrice. Maids and swains they would all be at it, and the stoutest and strongest dancer was the envy of all in this Arcadia where there was so much good cheer and so little to envy. A maid of fourteen begged her master and mistress, friends of Kemp, that she might dance the morrice with the visitor from London. He was soon won, as he says, to fit her with bells, besides which "she would have the old fashion with napkins on her arms, and to our jumps we fell. A whole hour she held out. But then being ready to lie down I left her off; but this in her praise, I would have challenged the strongest man in Chelmsford and, amongst many, I think few would have done so much."

The road beyond Chelmsford was the heaviest that ever mad morrice-dancer trod. So bad was it he would have left the road for the fields but that thick woods made this impossible. But bad as it was, he had company. Through deep holes he skipped, sometimes up to his waist, but always with a string of admirers at his heels to brace his spirits. Coming to a broad splash of water and mud he rose to it, but leaping short, fell in at the further end. A youth that followed took his jump, but stuck fast in the middle and was held prisoner in the mud until another yokel waded in and helped him out.

All the while Kemp laughed at their wretched plight though his own can have been but little better, and they no less cheerful but with their fill of dancing, wished him "God speed" and would bear him company no longer.

At Sudbury, Kemp relates that a very kind gentleman, Master Foskew, came to see him. Foskew was himself a person of some eminence, having once walked from London to Berwick. Presuming on his reputation, he gave the morrice-dancer some good advice, as for example to be temperate in his diet and careful of his company, with other tags of wisdom learned from his daring exploits in the

semi-barbarous and inaccessible North. Sudbury had its comedy. A butcher, a big, lusty fellow, desirous of showing his paces before his neighbours, would dance with the stranger. As they footed it along the road they had the whole country-side as an audience. But the butcher was not equal to his ambition, and before he had completed half a mile threw up the sponge. At this there was laughter and jeering from the multitude.

"Faint-hearted lout!" cried a buxom wench. "If I had begun to dance I would have held out for a mile though it cost my life."

The crowd laughed, which put the wench upon her mettle.

"Nay," said she, "if the dancer will lend me a leash of bells I'll try a mile with him myself."

As she spoke she tucked up her russet petticoat. If she wore stockings they were of coarse grey, but while Kemp omits this point he is precise as to her legs being thick and short, and that her eyes danced with mirth.

The tabourer struck up his music, the merry Maid Marian "shook her fat sides," and off they started. As good as her word the girl danced for a full mile.

> "Her stump legs, with bells were garnished;
> Her brown brows, with sweating varnished;
> Her brown hips, when she was lag,
> To win her ground, went swig-a-swag."

But at last these brave "stump legs" were beaten. Half-dead with fatigue she dropped out of the dance and was regaled with beer and for her reward given a crown.

From Melford he had as companion the fool kept by a magnate of the neighbourhood, whose master and his friends followed for about a mile. Arriving at Bury, he was the guest of a rich widow at whose house some thirty gentlemen were gathered to see the morrice-dancer, or so,

at least, thought Kemp, who with the *naïveté* of a great artist never dreamt that such unconsidered trifles as the lady or her wealth could have attracted so many East Anglian gallants to her lonely roof-tree.

On reading Kemp's history of his adventure one is struck with the frequency with which private people of position received the dancer as their guest. Social life was simple in the sense that caste distinctions were few, and such as they were nobody ever dreamt of questioning their propriety or inquiring into their origin. There was on all hands a childlike acceptance of things as they were. The spirit of feudalism flourished though the system had in all its main features ceased to be. In the country, therefore, hospitality was free from conventional restrictions for which there was no need. Gentle and simple met as brothers, but as brothers filling divinely-ordered places which made them in some respects different orders of being altogether. For the lower order there could be no climbing up. For the higher there could be no falling down. Genius created some exceptions in the former case, and in the latter the extreme of folly or misfortune sometimes reduced good blood to obscurity. But as a rule it was, so far as rank went, an unchanging world.

It was a world in which no personage, not even the lord of the manor, was of higher importance to the commonwealth than the inn-keepers. All classes who travelled had to use the inns, and since books were few and newsletters small and scarce, the landlord had to possess some real virtues as a host or time would be apt to hang heavily on the hands of his patrons. The inns on the main roads were numerous and good, with roofs well thatched and floors of well-swept brick, upon which the open fire shone as upon some bronze-toned marble. Oaken rafters, black with age, spanned the ceiling. The dresser was laden with shining pewter, while through the low diamond-shaped casements came the odour of roses, when roses

bloomed, blended with the fragrance of lavender and many another sweet English herb. At Rockland, Kemp was welcomed by an inn-keeper who had donned his Sunday best for the meeting. His black shoes were garnished with copper buckles. Garters in the height of the fashion adorned his hose. Breeches and doublet fitted this rural magnifico like a glove. His carefully-chosen words were worthy of his apparel, and his hospitality worthy of both.

On the way to Hingham young men and maidens thronged over the fields to greet the dancer, and as he passed they vied one with another for his notice, offering advice as to the path he should follow.

"The fairest way is through our village," cried one.

"The fairest way is through ours," protested another.

"Turn on the left hand," cried a third.

"Turn to the right hand," urged a rival.

But whatever road he took, the people followed, cheering him as he went like the children that they were.

From Hingham five young men ran with the dancer for some miles, and then as he approached the rich and populous city of Norwich multitudes of people flocked from all parts to watch the end of this strange and memorable achievement. Nothing would do Kemp but to show his finest paces footing it through the ancient city. But the crowds in the streets made good dancing or any dancing impossible. He therefore mounted his gelding and rode to the mayor, to whom he explained his desire to give Norwich of his best. Therefore he would dance through the city at a time when the officials could arrange to keep order.

The pageants of Norwich, pageants fostered by the Corporation and the great House of Howard, which kept up semi-regal style in the ducal palace, were famous. But

the coming of the Sovereign could not have drawn to the streets happier or more curious multitudes than did Kemp's morrice-dance. A local poet handed to Kemp verses made in his honour. The Corporation officers kept a clear path for him through the excited crowds. In the market-place the City Waits, with viol and violin and wind instruments, saluted him with national melodies.

The crowd and the cheering and the music in the market-place seem to have made Kemp caper more nimbly than ever, so that the people near him had to have a care to avoid his heels. One lass, however, was not alert enough. For a country girl of her class she was bravely arrayed, her high-waisted petticoat being laced corset-wise. Perhaps in her haste to the festival her fingers had played her traitor, and that the lacing had not been firmly knotted. Whatever the cause, her misfortune has passed into history. Taking a flying leap, Kemp's foot caught in her skirt. The lacing either broke or yielded, and before all the multitude her petticoat fell from her. That was sport indeed for the merry crowd. Mischievous urchins pounced upon the garment like terriers on their quarry, and away they ran, the poor wench recovering it only after an ordeal that made her wish she had never left her knitting or her scrubbing. She had, however, one solace in her torment, for Kemp tells us that though her smock was coarse, it was cleanly.

And then one asks what did Kemp make out of this brave show of his accomplishments? He says himself he put out some money at threefold gain, or in other words he made a book, the odds being three to one against him. When he returned to London, not all these bets were paid, but the exhibition would seem nevertheless to have been a financial success. There were, moreover, the profits on the sale of his merchandise.

He complains that "thin-breached ballet-singers" chronicled unfaithfully the story of his dance. But Kemp would not have his great feat misrepresented, so, taking up

HENRIETTA, DUCHESS OF ORLEANS

FROM A PAINTING AT HARDWICK HALL

his pen, this fellow of many parts set down the true version of how he danced and danced all the way from London to the City of Spires, little dreaming that his pamphlet would take its modest place as a mirror reflecting to all time the homely panorama of a few days of his century.

CHAPTER X

"THE BOOK OF SPORTS"

WHEN James I. came to the throne, Puritan influences had already begun to colour in some slight degree the habits of the people. All through the ages the English had been famous for their prowess in field-sports, taking life lustily and in a way that bred stout fighters on land and sea, and bold adventurers who trimmed their sails to every wind in search of fortune. But though Puritanism frowned upon every light recreation, disciples were attracted in steadily-increasing numbers to the new tenets.

The traditional custom of the people all through mediæval days was to assemble for play in the village after divine service on Sundays. But now silence frequently brooded over the place, for in all quarters persons were to be found who, having themselves embraced the new opinions, were able to enforce upon others at least outward respect for them.

King James disapproved of the change, not only because he delighted in outdoor amusements himself, but also for reasons of State. The people, excluded from the village green, turned to the ale-houses, where they would naturally gossip of great affairs, thus affording to the disaffected opportunity for undermining the loyalty of simple men, and for hatching plots against the dynasty. The village green was, however, something more than a mere playground. It was there that Agincourt and many another battlefield had been won, for there, generation after generation, youth against youth, on his mettle for the glory of his hamlet, had learned the archer's art, mak-

ing English bowmen the terror of their country's enemies. The day of the bow and arrow had passed away. But leaping, vaulting, running, hurling, football and many other games that fostered hardihood and fitted men for the hardships of the battlefield were played there.

The village green was the nursery of the King's army, and to close it against his subjects was in some degree to paralyse his right arm.

The amusements of the villages were also sobered to some extent by the penal laws against the Catholics. Religious troubles brought in their train bad blood and a thousand suspicions and misunderstandings. The careless, easy spirit that, childlike, delights in play because the blood is tingling with health, and hearts are light, and heels are feather-weights, dies in an atmosphere of doubt and intrigue. Men oppressed with fear are not good company for those who may look all the world boldly in the face.

The laws against recusants, that is those who did not attend divine service in the parish church, were designed to effect the ruin of Catholics or bring them into the Established Church. If the law had simply banned the mass, the Catholic might nevertheless have joined in the outdoor pastimes of his neighbours. It was the obligation under heavy punishment of attending the Protestant service that made him afraid of his own shadow.

The laws were not always enforced. Gentle and simple connived at breaches of them because the majority of the people were disposed to make life as smooth as might be for neighbours who had no other fault than that they held to the faith of their fathers. But every county had its professional informers and a proportion of magistrates, sticklers for the letter of the law, and to be invisible to the eyes of such observers was the desire of every Catholic, more especially of those who had property to lose.

But though he chose the by-paths and the shelter of the hedgerows when the village green rang with the merry-

makings of his happier brethren, it was the law not the recusant's faith that barred him from the placid enjoyment of his fortune and his liberty. The Puritan, on the contrary, was dull to men of earth because merry-making was vanity and his heart was in the skies and he would be melancholy for conscience sake.

Growing impatient of these depressing influences, James I. issued a mandate enjoining Englishmen to practise on the Sabbath those sports at which their ancestors had played from time immemorial.

In "The Book of Sports," as the Royal edict was called, the King complained that the Puritans in Lancashire had forbidden games on the Sabbath, and that people had been punished for indulging in them. It would seem that magistrates and clergymen, and even bishops, had Puritan sympathies, for a combination of all these influences was necessary to produce the state of affairs deplored by the monarch. His Majesty pointed out that the Catholic priests would seize on such doctrine to the great disadvantage of Protestantism. The priests, he said, would take occasion to persuade the people that "no mirth or recreation was lawful or tolerable in our religion." A religion that made all frivolous pursuits sinful would, his Majesty hoped, never become the religion of England. But his hopes and his policy were equally vain. It became in time the dominant creed and shook his House to its foundations. Strangely enough, too, it held sway in virtue of the military prowess of its disciples. Yet James had given it as a reason for ordering his subjects to play on Sunday, that in this way the meaner sort of people might "make their bodies more able for war."

The games expressly mentioned as lawful in "The Book of Sports" were dancing for men and women, archery for men, leaping and vaulting, morrice-dances and maypole games. Whitsun ales were also declared lawful. This latter concession needs a word of explanation. At Whitsuntide it was the custom of the parish authorities to brew

ale and bake cakes with which to regale the people after divine service. These rural feasts doubtless had their origin in the solicitude of the Church for the poor during the ages when it fulfilled with the approval of the State the office of their protectress. The custom had fallen into abeyance, probably as a result of the Puritan feeling against festivity and rejoicing. James, however, ordered its restoration, so that at Whitsuntide beer should flow for every man who would drink, and the poorest eat of finer bread than any they could bake on their own humble hearths.

"The Book of Sports" contained prohibitions that are as interesting as its positive injunctions. Bear and bull-baitings and bowls, and anything in the nature of theatrical display, all of which were ordinarily lawful, were not to be indulged in on the Sabbath, while outdoor recreation of any kind was forbidden to all who should absent themselves from divine service.

The prohibition of bowls, in itself an orderly game, can only be accounted for on the assumption that it led to quarrelling. It was a favourite game with rich and poor. Every village, every mansion in town and country, every popular rendezvous, had its bowling-green. Bets were no doubt made upon a game which was played with so much enthusiasm. Gambling was certain to give rise to disputes and violence, and in this way the national recreation was, we may presume, deemed too exciting for the respectful observance of the Lord's Day.

The prohibition of bear-baiting was not so much a concession to Puritan sentiment as a tribute to the sacred character of the Day of Rest which could be omitted from no code designed to promote religion and good order. The wonder indeed is that such exhibitions were tolerated at all even in a semi-barbarous age, degrading as they were to the manners of the community.

Bull-baiting and bear-baiting, the baiting indeed of any animal that would show sport, was a pastime that

drew together all ranks in town and country. London was as enthusiastic for such diversion in the seventeenth century as was Madrid. But while in Madrid the fight took place with stately ceremony in a gravelled square surrounded by mansions, from the balconies of which great dames and nobles watched the toreadors risk their lives, in London it was the recreation of the mob.[1] The mob always had its leavening of aristocrats, but the ruling spirit was the lawless spirit of a lawless rabble.

Once a horse was baited as a special treat for the envoy of the Sultan of Morocco. This horse was a ferocious animal some nineteen hands high. The entertainment took place at the Hope Gardens on the Surrey side of the river. The horse had passed through the stables of several noblemen, and having killed a number of people, was cast as perilous for saddle or coach. The proprietors of the bear-gardens, men of business, jumped at the chance of so attractive an investment.

When the great day came and the horse was let loose in the ring where the Moorish envoy filled the place of honour, the crowd, athirst for blood, had their fill of excitement. It was not a circle of toreadors that he had to face, but the terrible English mastiff, which in Madrid they only introduced into the ring as a last resort, when the toreadors had been hopelessly defeated.[2]

London had seen many savage, many pitifully horrible sights. It was the age when dead bodies swung on the scaffold for weeks and months, when men were whipped at the cart tail for trivial misdemeanours, when they were pressed to death at Newgate, when ears and noses were mutilated, and quivering flesh branded with hot irons. What then of a horse whom no man could tame face to face with the English mastiff—the dog that struck cold fear to the boldest heart!

A writer of the time describes these dogs as " vast, huge, stubborn, ugly and eager. . . . . More fierce and fell

[1] Clarendon's *Rebellion.* [2] *Seventeenth Century Tracts.*

than any Arcadian cur, notwithstanding they are said to have their generation of the lion. . . . The force which was in them exceedeth all belief; the first hold which they take with their teeth exceedeth all credit."

Mastiff after mastiff was let loose upon the horse, these brutes thought to be a match for lions, but each in turn was made to bite the dust. The quarry was unconquerable.[1]

The proprietors of the Hope began to think that they had become the possessors of a gold mine. They would keep the horse to fight another day, and yet perhaps another. Perhaps bequeath him to their children! But the public were out for blood. The bargain was death for their money, and death they would behold. They threatened to tear down the building unless the horse was baited to death. Into the ring, therefore, the wretched brute was once more turned, and once more the hideous monsters with bloodshot eyes and chops heavy with foam were set upon him. Bandog and horse, horse and bandog, rolled over and over amidst the roars of the savages that had purchased every drop of sweat and blood, and every pang, and wanted the uttermost enjoyment of their bargain. But in the end the horse was victorious. The dogs that had panted by the dead bodies of bears and bulls, the victory all their own, were beaten, though how the gallant brute had survived the attack of a dozen such monsters is a mystery.

Since he would not be permitted to live, he had at least earned the right to die, and so they despatched him with a sword.

Equally demoralizing was cock-fighting. Every parish had its cockpit. The ownership of a bird of matchless excellence was a source of honour and profit. The cockpit was a favourite rendezvous for all classes, especially for hardened gamblers, a vice so universal in the second half of the century that an empty purse was seemingly

[1] Malcolm's *London*.

the only shield against its allurements. Fighting cocks when young were deprived of their spurs, long barbs of silver or steel being fitted on them instead when the time came to test their spirit. Birds of the best breed fought with incredible ferocity, tearing each other to pieces with their sharply-pointed metal spurs, until one or the other was left dead or dying on the field. The people looked on half-mad with excitement, yelling in their frenzy, as the wretched brutes, on whom depended the issue of their bets, blinded with blood and exhausted with their wounds, toppled one over the other in the final convulsion of the encounter.

Pepys has left a vivid picture of the motley society that was wont to patronize a cockpit. Men who looked as though they wanted bread were seen by the diarist to wager pounds and lose them, courting utter ruin in the gambler's hope that some valiant bird would reward their blind faith with a magical gift of fortune.

In the reign of Charles I. "The Book of Sports" was republished. But Puritanism had by this time made great advances, and the edict only added to the King's unpopularity. Itinerant preachers travelled hither and thither, making converts wholesale by dint of rugged sincerity. Chief of these was George Fox, the founder of the Quakers. Up and down the country these men raised their voices against luxury and drunkenness and the other vices they saw, or fancied they saw, hurrying their fellows to perdition. Their doctrines were easily understood, and at fair and market converts thronged round them eager to be saved. Perhaps the condemnation of those without the fold is one of the minor gratifications of the bigot of every creed. In this, too, the followers of these wayside evangelists were gratified. Those who differed from their own simple formula of salvation were roundly anathematised. To them the most odious of all devilries was the stage. Its art was the art of Satan. This Puritanical hostility to the theatres became so intense in town and

country, and amongst all the more sober sections of the people, that in 1642 they were suppressed.

It was only towards the close of the Tudor epoch that the theatres thus rudely crushed out of existence had obtained a fixed place in the social life of England. Before Elizabeth's time plays were performed in temporary theatres or in the houses of the wealthy. When James came to the throne the Black and White Friars were already licensed theatres. Others quickly grew up, and soon there were the Globe on the Bankside, famous for seeing the birth of *Hamlet*, the Cockpit or Phœnix in Drury Lane, the Curtain in Shoreditch, the Red Bull in St John Street, and the Fortune in Whitecross Street.

A modern play-goer permitted to see the old Globe in his dreams would be chilled perhaps by the primitive scenery and the crude "property." But occasionally time and money and art were allied to produce magnificent effects. Inigo Jones designed scenes for the Royal masques at Whitehall which might well surprise a modern audience. But the regular theatre was too young to have made progress with subsidiary arts. The scene of action was at times written up on a board. This, however, does not mean that there was no attempt at scenic illusion. On the contrary, it explained and supplemented such scenery as there was, serving the purpose of a printed programme at a time when print was too expensive a luxury for general distribution.

The interior of the theatre followed in the main modern lines. The stage occupied one side of the house. Facing it was the pit. Above there was a gallery or balcony running round three sides of the building. Close to the stage were boxes. A penny purchased admission to standing room in the humbler houses. Half-a-crown purchased the best place in the best of them. The curtain hung in two. When a trumpet-call announced the start of the performance this was drawn apart.

Women had no place on the pre-Restoration stage.

There were, of course, exceptions. Necessity, if no other reason, probably, obliged the wives and daughters of the poor, strolling players who toured the country, setting up booths at fair and market or on the village green, to walk the boards for the delectation of the country-folk. But in the regular theatres actresses would not be tolerated. Puritan sentiment favoured their exclusion. But it was not alone responsible for it. The genius of Shakespeare, of Jonson, of Beaumont and Fletcher, of Massinger, and of the other giants of the early days of the century, must have awakened widespread interest in dramatic art. Fortunes were made by the theatre, and money in every age confers a distinction which no order despises. Shakespeare was a rich man. Even actors were sometimes men of substance, for Will Kemp had capital at command, or his adventures in East Anglia could hardly have been carried out on so ambitious a scale. But mediæval notions still prevailed as to the proper sphere of women. Her place was her own home or in domestic service. If she was not found in either place it was as a rule because she had placed herself outside the pale of both.

The story goes that one night a pre-Restoration theatre was crowded with an eager audience. The boxes and stalls were filled with the flower of fashion. In the pit were the citizens and their wives. In the gallery were the footmen and coachmen and chairmen and other attendants of the gentle-folk, who, according to custom, were admitted free. Still the curtain did not open and the varlets in the gallery began to show impatience. Then the manager appeared to make his excuses for the delay.

"The Queen," he said, "is being shaved."

To modern ears it sounds droll. But it was droll truth. The Queen whom Shakespeare knew in *Hamlet*, his Lady Macbeth, his tender Rosalind, the fair Juliet, the gentle Ophelia, could only divest themselves of their everyday personalities by submitting themselves to the rites of the barber.

The Restoration effected a revolution in this respect. The audience no longer waited while the Queen was being shaved, but their patience may have been tried if Her Majesty's favoured beau was late in coming, or being come was dallying with her behind the scenes.

Not the theatres alone suffered at Cromwell's hands. He closed Spring Gardens, adjoining St James's Park, which had for long been the resort of the well-to-do. Here they played at games and dined, its sequestered walks being specially favoured by "men of gallantry." Hyde Park was sold to private capitalists. It was not, however, closed to the public. On the contrary, a charge was made for admission to "the ring," as the space was called around which fashionable people drove and rode. Races were sometimes held there, though not of course in Cromwellian days, and then humble folk flocked thither from all parts and saw not only the sport of the day but Punch and Judy shows, performing dogs, and bears and monkeys, gambled with cards or dice, drank ale or cider, and in the evening, elated with their revels, made the roads leading to the city or to the villages around none too safe for travellers. At the Restoration, however, the Park was restored to the Crown, and there on a fine evening two or three hundred coaches might be seen rolling round and round "the ring," laden with the cream of English society out to see and be seen.

CHAPTER XI

THE HIGHWAY: THE ROAD TO ADVENTURE

TRAVEL even in a modest way was an enterprise that only the wealthy could accomplish with any degree of comfort. When the man of rank left his manor-house for London or for some other quarter of the country, he was escorted by mounted servants with pistols in their holsters, who at any moment might find themselves ambushed by robbers and obliged to acquit themselves as soldiers in their master's service.

The coach was the most luxurious and stately mode of travel. Coaches had been in vogue from about the fourteenth century, but they long continued primitive and heavy in their design and appointments. During the reign of Elizabeth they were, however, much improved, and following the royal example, " great ladies made them coaches and rode up and down the countrie " to the great admiration of the beholders. But coaches were still without springs, with perforated metal shutters instead of glass, while the roads were so bad that only affairs of the utmost urgency induced people to undertake a long journey when the weather was unfavourable.

In 1634 the first hackney-coach was posted in the Strand. These were for service in the town. Within a decade a limited service between London and various parts of the country had grown up. At the Hell in Aldersgate Street the coach from St Albans and Hatfield had its terminus in 1639. That from Hertford at the Four Swans without Bishopsgate Street. The coach to Salisbury from Aldersgate Street reached Salisbury in two days. It left

three times a week, the journey costing one pound. The coach took four days to York, sometimes, if the weather was bad, six days; and the fare was two pounds. To Newcastle the cost was three pounds.

The well-to-do, and even people of rank, occasionally used the stage-coaches as they thus enjoyed protection and companionship without the expense of providing it out of their own pockets. Coach-hire in the town was one shilling and sixpence for the first hour and one shilling for every hour afterwards. The fares for the stage-coaches were about threepence a mile. The journey was generally about thirty-three miles a day. From six shillings a day might be allowed for the traveller's keep at the inns on the way. The outlay on a journey to York would therefore be about four pounds, equivalent to at least twelve pounds of our coinage, a sum beyond the purses of any but the highly prosperous.

Post-horses were threepence a mile, riding-horses two shillings the first day and half that amount afterwards, the hirer to provide forage and stabling and bring back the animal.

Travellers of the humbler sort, who yet were not so poor that they should perforce walk, might resort to the carriers, hundreds of whom traversed the country in all directions, starting at a fixed time from well-known inns and taverns in London and Westminster. The carrier took a passenger in his waggon for a trifle, he on his part easing the horses by walking up-hill, or putting his shoulder to the wheel when the huge lumbering vehicle sank to its axles in ruts and mire.

Such were the means of intercommunication when the post-office was first introduced in 1635. It was the official recognition of a system which had been growing up for generations, a system in which the common carrier was the first, the most primitive link, a system in which he was long to continue an indispensable auxiliary. A horse-post and foot-post were now, however, organized

with the object of providing regular and speedy means of communication between all quarters of the kingdom.

The horse-post rode from stage to stage, changing his steed at the appointed resting-places. As he galloped along over the ill-cultivated and sparsely-populated countryside he from time to time waked the echoes of the lonely wastes with a brave flourish on his horn warning the inhabitants of his coming. Eagerly, far and wide, did they strain their ears to catch that welcome blast, and, having heard it, from grange and farmstead and hovel, moved by common emotions, gentle and simple streamed to cross-roads and wayside hostelry, hopeful that the courier would not send them away with empty hands. When communication was beset with so many difficulties and dangers, months and even years sometimes elapsed without tidings coming from the wanderer to those he had left behind. Fond hopes that over and over again had been disappointed again and again revived as the postman's horn rang over hill and dale, penetrating to the great hearth of the castle hall and to the cheerless hovel, where sire or dame, or wife or sweetheart, cherished the image of some dear one battling for fame at the palisades, or for wealth on distant seas.

The despatch of letters to-day is an automatic affair. The machine is human, but it is a machine none the less. But in the seventeenth century every step exacted intelligence and resource. The postal system depended too for its success upon the honesty and good-will and energy of an immense number of people who were independent, almost entirely, of anything in the nature of supervision. If one desired to send a letter to some remote town in Yorkshire, one went to Ludgate, then to the Bell Savage Inn close by, and there entrusted it to the carrier for the county in question. Or going to St John Street and there entering the Rose and Crown, one found a regular post for that shire. The messenger from London would not penetrate into by-ways. Each county had its system

of foot-posts, which linked the outlying districts with its chief towns and with the great highroads. The London courier, pressing on to his terminus, was relieved of packets for remote regions by the local postman, who in turn passed them on from hand to hand to their destination. In somewhat similar fashion, though less regularly and smoothly, letters intended for Wales or Scotland or Ireland were carried over the long and tedious journey to the hands for which they were laboriously indited. Worcester and Chester were centres whence the Welsh post started, while Berwick was the natural centre of distribution for North Britain.

The horse-post was a comparatively swift service and, where packets of value were in question, more to be depended on than the carrier or foot-post, if the highwaymen did not cut short the journey.

A long list of inns and taverns of the period can still be read in "The Carriers' Cosmography," together with information as to where the "carriers, waggons, foot-posts and higglers do usually come from any parts, towns, shires and countries of the kingdom of England; as also from the kingdom of Scotland and Ireland. With nomination of what days of the week they do come to London and what days of the week they return; whereby all sorts of people may find direction how to receive or send goods or letters into such place as their occasions may require. As also where the ships, barks, tilt-boats, barges and wherries do usually attend to carry passengers and goods to the coast towns of England, Scotland, Ireland or the Netherlands; and where the barges and boats are ordinarily to be had that go up the river of Thames westward from London."[1]

In the "Cosmography" we read that "the carriers or posts that go to Exeter may send daily to Plymouth or to the Mount in Cornwall. Mixfield, Chippenham, Hunger-

[1] "The Carriers' Cosmography," by John Taylor, *Seventeenth Century Tracts.*

ford, Newbury and all these towns between London and Bristol, the Bristol carriers do carry letters unto them; so likewise all the towns and places are served betwixt London and Lincoln, Boston, Yarmouth, Oxford, Cambridge, Walsingham, Dover, Rye or any other place of the King's dominions with safe and true carriage of goods and letters."

The "Cosmography" was prepared and published by a private person at his own expense and for his own profit. It contains an amount of information that could only have been compiled at the cost of much time and persevering labours. It enables one, therefore, to form some faint idea of the trouble involved in discovering how one ought to transmit a letter or parcel to some destination which lay along an unfrequented route. The postmaster was doubtless in most cases familiar only with those places with which he was brought constantly into contact in his business. If it was a question of sending a post to some sequestered place in Wales or to any place beyond the Border, he was thrown back upon his own resources to find the needful links. But the author of the "Cosmography" also worked with an eye to broader interests. "If," he says, "a man at Constantinople or some other remote part or region shall chance to send a letter to his parents, master or friends that dwell at Nottingham, Derby, Shrewsbury, Exeter or any other town in England, then this book will give instructions where the carriers do lodge that may convey the same letter, which could not easily be done without it; for there are not many that by heart or memory can tell suddenly where and when every carrier is to be found."

The ships plying from port to port were in some sense like the carriers between London and the provinces. They were always ready to take letters and parcels aboard and convey them some distance at least towards their destination, handing them over when necessary to other ships, these in turn repeating the process or, if proper, handing

them over to inland carriers or post-boys. Little wonder that some anxiety was felt for the fate of important letters, and that when articles of special value had to be transported special couriers were employed.

The difficulty and danger of transporting valuables was one of the chief causes why each important provincial centre possessed many of the characteristics of a metropolis. To-day gold traverses the whole world as easily as the blood circulates through a healthy frame. In the seventeenth century there was no such free circulation. On the contrary, the transfer of anything of great worth was a costly and dangerous enterprise. There were no banks in the modern sense. The goldsmiths and pawnbrokers in Cheapside held valuables for customers and, if required to do so, lent money upon them or upon other security equally good. The meaner class of money-lenders were to be found about Moorfields. The custom of London in this respect applied also to the provinces. There were those who advanced loans upon gilt-edged securities like gold and silver and precious stones, title-deeds to property and mortgages. There were others who, for higher interest, took greater risks. The people were their own bankers when they had money to save, hiding it away in secret drawers and strong boxes, or even burying it in seasons of popular commotion.

The civil troubles had done much to retard the progress of free intercommunication and to continue the dependence of local centres upon purely local resources. They had dislocated trade, loosened the bonds of order, reduced the poor to a state of abject misery, and given turbulent spirits opportunities for licence that in normal times they could never have enjoyed. Immense numbers were professional criminals who lived in slums into which no constable or watchman or bailiff dared to penetrate.

The aristocracy of these criminals were the footpads, most famous of whom was, perhaps, Monsieur Claude Duval, the son of a Norman miller, who came to England

to seek his fortune and found it on the King's highway.[1] The story goes that an old friar came one day to the miller's home in Domfront when Claude was still a mere boy, and that the reverend guest, struck with his bearing, told his fortune. He was to be a great traveller; he was to enjoy extraordinary favour with women of the highest condition; and never, during his life, should he be long without money. The parents rejoiced at their son's happy prospects, though it could not enter into their imagination how such a future awaited him.

When he was about thirteen or fourteen years old his friends resolved to give him a start in the great world. They bought him shoes and stockings, the first he had ever worn, and a new suit of clothes, and bidding him go seek the fortune promised him by the friar, they gave him their blessing, and as he stepped out along the road to Paris flung after him a lucky shoe.

Claude stayed for a time in Paris, earning his bread as an errand-boy, his master being the keeper of a tavern that was much in favour with English visitors. The Englishmen delighted the young Norman. They had plenty of money and spent it like princes. If ever town was paved with precious metal it must assuredly be that from which so many of these gay fellows came. In London it was always harvest-time. He would go there and reap his share.

As a gentleman's servant he had leisure and opportunity for studying the English capital and the avenues which it offered to promotion for so nimble-witted and pretty a fellow. He had learned in Paris the art of gaming and of making love, to shoot straight with pistols, and to handle a rapier with the skill of a master. These were the qualities for a knight of the road, and, quitting domestic service, he embraced his true vocation.

His rise to fame in his new sphere showed the genius of the fellow. When a proclamation was issued for the

[1] "Memoirs of Monsieur Duval," *Harleian Miscellany*.

capture of several notorious robbers, the name of Monsieur Duval was first on the list. It is related that with his merrymen he one morning overtook a coach in which travelled a knight and his dame, attended only by a serving-maid.[1] The maid was the first to observe five horsemen on the skyline, all apparently members of the same company. The travellers were not long in doubt as to the quality of the strangers, and to show she was not afraid the dame took out a flageolet and, as the highwaymen gained upon them, began to play. The chief of the robbers was none other than Duval. He also was a musician, and, pleased with the lady's spirit, he rode up to the side of the coach playing a flageolet of his own.

"Sir," he said to the knight, "your lady plays excellently, and I doubt not she dances as well. Will you please to step out of the coach and allow me to have the honour of dancing with her upon the heath?"

The poor knight saw nothing for it but to humour the highwayman.

"I dare not," he said, "deny anything to one of your quality and good mind. You seem a gentleman and your request is very reasonable."

Upon this the lackey opened the boot and the knight stepped out of the carriage. Duval leaped lightly from his horse in time to hand the lady out of the coach. And there they danced on the heath, the Frenchman footing it in his great riding-boots as gracefully as though the best masters had drilled him in his steps, while for music he sang, since he could not at the same time manage his flageolet and his partner.

The dance over, he handed the lady into her coach. The knight was about to follow when Duval reminded him he had forgotten to pay for the music.

"No, I have not," replied the knight, and putting his hand under the seat of the coach pulled out one hundred pounds in a bag and handed it over.

[1] "Memoirs of Monsieur Duval."

"Sir," courteously replied Duval, "you are liberal and shall have no cause to repent your being so. This liberality of yours shall excuse you the other three hundred pounds."

With this polite hint that he was well aware of the true state of the knight's exchequer, and that he had in effect allowed a discount of three hundred pounds in return for the civility shown him, he vaulted on his horse and rode away.

A story which shows him in a less amiable light describes him as holding up a coach on Blackheath in which rode a number of ladies, and with them one child. Duval showed no mercy. He took away their watches, money and rings, until nothing of value remained except the child's sucking-bottle, which was of silver. The little one wept; the mother implored. But the highwayman was immovable and would resign not even this fraction of his booty. But amongst his companions there was one of gentler fibre. He stood up against his chief and obliged him to accede to the prayers and tears of the mother and child.

By-and-by England became too hot to hold this accomplished brigand, and he fled into France. But in his native land money was scarce, or at least was less easily acquired in his profession than in England, so he returned once more to London, to the delight, it would seem, of the ladies, who rather enjoyed the adventures of this dapper fellow with fine black eyes and a white peruke and the air of a Court gallant.

He had not been long in England when the constables were so lucky as to find him helplessly drunk at the "Hole in the Wall Tavern" in Chandos Street. He had three pistols in his pocket and by his side an excellent sword, and, according to the chronicler, a fellow of his prowess so armed would easily have killed ten men before being taken. But as it was, the officers got their man without suffering a scratch, and when Claude awoke to sobriety he was a

prisoner in Newgate. Vengeance quickly overtook him, for he was speedily convicted and condemned to the gallows. While awaiting the end "there were," says the writer of his memoirs, "a great company of ladies, and those not of the meanest degree, that visited him in prison, interceded for his pardon, and accompanied him to the gallows." Some, when they visited him, "durst not put off their vizards for fear of showing their eyes swollen and their cheeks blubbered with tears."

After Duval had been hanged, the body was cut down and taken in a coach to the Tangier Tavern in St Giles's. Here it was laid out in state, the room being hung with black cloth, the bier covered with escutcheons, while huge wax tapers, to the number of eight, lighted the apartment in which the same number of men, attired in long black cloaks, stood motionless and silent as a guard of honour. This mockery of Royal mourning by the bier of a felon lasted for a whole night. Then the authorities interfered, and this ghastly travesty of woe, which had made the Tangier Tavern the talk of the town, was brought to an end, much to the disgust of the tavern-keeper, to whom the dead highwayman was apt to have brought a small fortune.

Bad roads and desolate heaths made the work of the highwayman easy. A police force in the modern sense, or indeed in any efficient sense, there was none. The robber's vices, as in Duval's case, more frequently accomplished his destruction than the activity of the constables. The difficulty found in disposing of valuable property also led occasionally to the detection of the thief.

Evelyn, travelling on horseback alone from Tunbridge, when within a few miles from Bromley was set upon by two ruffians, who pulled him from his horse, bereft him of his sword, and dragging him to a thicket remote from the highway robbed him at leisure of his valuables. The diarist tells us that he had not a lot of money upon him, which probably explains why he was riding alone. The

foot-pads, nevertheless, had a remunerative day, as they got from him an emerald and diamond ring and a pair of buckles set with rubies and diamonds. When they had finished plundering him they bound him hand and foot, and then set him up against an oak, warning him that if he cried out they would shoot him as they had further business on hand of the same kind, expecting another person. Evelyn told them that if he had been in the middle of the road they would not have had so easy a victory, at which the rascals cocked their pistols as a sufficient answer. His horse they tethered to a tree, as to steal him would make their detection certain, the animal being uncommonly marked. After a couple of hours Evelyn managed to free his hands and feet, and mounting his horse rode away.

The sequel is interesting as showing the procedure followed by the victim of such misfortune. A hue-and-cry was raised, which included the printing and circulating of three hundred tickets giving a description of the stolen property. The ring was pawned to a goldsmith's servant. Some of the property was offered to a victualler. But he had seen the tickets and seized the man, who was thrown into prison. Evelyn concludes: "I was summoned to appear against him, but not being willing to hang him, did not appear. But the bill being found, he was turned over to the Old Bailey. In the meantime his father, who was an honest old farmer in Kent, petitioned me. He was charged with other crimes, condemned and reprieved. I heard if it was not for his companion he would have killed me. He afterwards was charged with another crime, and refusing to plead was pressed to death." The choice of so terrible a death by a common robber, whose heirs had nothing to lose by his conviction, appears inexplicable.

Dishonesty in one form or another was the most common species of crime. A transgression of the most deadly kind which sounds strange to modern ears was

that of "chipping the coinage." Parsons, baronets, beggars, lawyers, all tried thus to temper the wind of adverse fortune, and expiated their enterprise on the gallows. Women-chippers escaped the rope, but only to be burnt alive. Hosts of delinquents convicted of minor offences were burnt in the hand, or branded on the cheek, or whipped. The infliction of agony was indeed the chief end of the criminal law and it acted without restraint. Torture was the business of the victim. For all the rest of the world it was a recreation.

Every month the judge at the Old Bailey sent a numerous company to the scaffold. Many of these wretches were steeped to the lips in crime, but many, too, must have been condemned unjustly, for the net of the law was woven fine, and the poor man who once found himself confined in its meshes was lucky indeed if mere innocence secured him his liberty. The most abandoned ruffians were braggarts to the last. If such emotions as remorse or fear ever visited those inmates of Newgate who waited on the attentions of the executioner, they were drowned in drinking orgies, when their own purses or the generosity of friends made these excesses possible. At these scenes of revelry, where Death looked out from the shadows, the chaplain was occasionally to be seen as a guest, cheering as a boon-companion the last hours of those whose souls were beyond his ministrations.

CHAPTER XII

THE COINAGE OF THE PERIOD

THE savage punishments with which dishonesty was visited, or even indeed the suspicion of dishonesty, ought to have speedily freed the land from crime. But strangely enough men and women were ready every day to risk the most merciless torture, and death in its most harrowing forms, for trifling gain.

To understand the frame of mind which made men so indifferent to pain, so madly improvident of life itself, the grinding poverty which was the lot of a vast proportion of the people must be borne in mind.

From the slough of poverty there was practically no escape, nor was there much room for amelioration. Comforts were few and very expensive, while money was not only scarce but often of doubtful value. It was about four times as valuable as at present, according to the reckoning of the economists. From some points of view the value was, however, far higher. The crime of chipping the coinage was therefore more enormous than appears at first sight. There was, indeed, no crime which inflicted deeper or more widespread misery upon the most defenceless of the people. The highwayman took toll from the well-to-do. The chipper of coins robbed the poor, robbed them over and over again, for they were frequently obliged by their employers to receive such mutilated currency at the face value, while when the conditions were reversed these very same men accepted the coins only at their intrinsic worth.

Thus the original criminals were not the only persons to profit by the crime. They made roguery easy for others,

oguery of a kind that could not be punished though it rushed the poor with unimaginable ferocity.

Not common folk alone robbed the community by ampering with the coinage. Elizabeth found it necessary o call in base money issued during the reigns of her ather and brother, money so alloyed as not to be worth alf its face value. James I. set up two gold standards, ne finer than the other. That of superior quality consisted of angels valued at ten shillings, half-angels valued t five shillings, and quarter angels valued at two-and-ixpence. The gold of coarser quality consisted of overeigns, half-sovereigns, crowns and half-crowns. His ilver coinage consisted of crowns, half-crowns, shillings, ixpences, twopences, pence and halfpence.

The next gold coinage consisted of the rose rial valued t thirty shillings, the unit at twenty shillings, the spurrial t fifteen shillings, the double crown equivalent to ten hillings, the angel of the same value of finer gold, the Britain-crown valued at five shillings, the Thistle-crown t four shillings, and the half-crown at two and sixpence.

Towards the end of the reign of James I. the Welsh ilver mines began to be worked. But nevertheless ilver became so scarce, and its value rose to such an extent, hat in the time of Charles I. a premium had to be paid to btain change in that metal. Until a resort to arms ecame necessary Charles I. made but little change in the oinage beyond unifying the standard of crown and angel old. No more Thistle-crowns were issued, but the old lenominations of groats and threepences were once again minted. When the Civil War broke out the Royalists et up rude mints in various parts of the country, including Exeter, Oxford, Bristol and Chester. Some of these ocal coins were of the crudest workmanship, being merely its of silver of no regular shape at all. Tradesmen and armers and those generally who lived by barter, whether n kind or in personal service, had no choice but to accept uch coins as were put into currency by their superiors.

Common necessity operated so as to enable them to pass them on to their fellows, but this chaotic state of affairs must have entailed widespread loss and suffering amongst the poor, and widespread ruin amongst those who, in more settled days, had ranked amongst the well-to-do.

During the Commonwealth the design was altered, but the value of the coins was unchanged. The gold coins issued were the twenty-shilling piece and the double and Britain-crowns. The silver denominations were precisely as under the Monarchy. These coins bore on one side St George's Cross with the legend, " The Commonwealth of England "; and on the other the harp and the Cross were united with the legend, " God with us."

The Restoration was marked by important changes in the currency. The guinea, called after the place whence the gold had been imported, and bearing on one side the impress of an elephant, was now first coined, and was of the value of twenty shillings. A gold two-pound piece, and another valued at five pounds, were also minted. The silver coinage was restricted to the extent that no pieces of a less value than sixpence were produced, copper being now substituted for the finer metal.

How the poor must have suffered as a result of the scarcity of silver in the reign of James, and from the circulation in the succeeding reign of a multitude of coins of the most diverse patterns and uncertain values, will be the better appreciated when it is seen how small was their share of the nation's wealth.

The ordinary labourer, whether in town or country, earned on an average about fourpence a day, including his food. Where he had no food he had proportionately more. A woman haymaker had twopence, a woman reaper threepence; a man at the same occupation would have fourpence or fivepence a day. The carpenter and bricklayer and artisans of similar grade had from eightpence to a shilling a day, the difference being often due to the worker receiving his board in lieu of money. A

man-servant in the country had from twenty shillings to five or six pounds a year. A woman-servant in the country began at fourteen shillings a year, and by the time she could bake and brew and do plain cooking she advanced perhaps to twenty-six shillings a year. The wages of indoor servants were higher, of course, in well-to-do families, so that for less work a cook received four pounds a year, or even more in a wealthy household. A coachman had six pounds a year with livery thrown in, and a footman might have half that.

What rent amounted to in the country, in the case of the poor, can only be estimated from the general conditions of their lives. According to modern ideas it would, however, be the merest trifle. The humblest of the peasantry made their homes on common-land, or on the confines of desolate and unreclaimed marshes, as in the Fen country, where in those days neither tithe nor rent was paid to any man. Where no foothold could be obtained on common-land, the agricultural labourer may have paid for his patch of earth by personal service in the landlord's fields in spring or harvest-time. A princess could engage lodgings for one pound a week. For a trifle more than this the Lady Arabella Stuart was accommodated at Barnet. We may therefore infer that the labourer's modest home could not have cost him half as much in a year, even when he paid for it in cash. He lived mainly on vegetables and black bread. His beverage was watery beer. Meat of any kind he or his rarely tasted, especially fresh meat, which, with white bread, was a luxury within the means only of the rich. Clothing of all kinds was dear. Peacham[1] refers to an old acquaintance at Lynn, in Norfolk, who, when he had worn a hat for eight-and-thirty years, would have petitioned Parliament that hatters should abuse the country by making their wares so slight. When it is borne in mind how scarce money was and how meagrely all classes of workers were paid, the heavy

[1] Peacham's *Worth of a Penny*.

cost of living in comfort can be deduced from the following table of commodities and their prices:[1]

	£	s.	d.
Cheese, per lb.	0	0	4
Potatoes, per lb. (1613)	0	2	0
Mutton and beef, per lb.	0	0	3½
Turkeys, each	0	3	0
Geese, each	0	2	0
Ducks, each	0	0	8
Eggs, three for	0	0	1
Butter, per lb.	0	0	6
Hens, each	0	1	0
Rabbits, each	0	0	7
Cloth, per yard	0	23	0
Woollen stockings	0	3	0
Worsted stockings	0	6	4
Boots	0	12	0
Black Shag hat	1	2	0
Spinning 1 lb. of wool	0	0	7
Carding 1 lb. of wool	0	0	1
Wood (the chief fuel), per load	0	2	6

The country labourer's home was generally a hovel of mud and chopped straw, built on a stone foundation, and without a chimney.[2] It consisted of but one apartment, and the tenant and his family shared it with the fowls and other domestic animals which they were so fortunate as to possess. Oak was plentiful, and in houses of greater pretensions there was a wooden framework filled in with mud, while the interior was divided into apartments according to the means and needs of the owner. Whitewash inside and outside was the simple embellishment of such a dwelling. If the owner of the house was a master-builder, or a peasant farmer, or a small tavern-keeper, the house was, perhaps, built up to a second story with the upper projecting over the lower, giving to the exterior a picturesque and inviting appearance. When there was a cellar, as was frequent in the city houses, it was entered

[1] George Roberts's *Social History of the People of the Southern Counties of England.*

[2] *Ibid.*

by steps from the roadway. In town the dwellings of the poorer classes were generally of wood. So dreadful was the havoc wrought at times by fire that rings were provided to pull them down in the event of an outbreak. Neither in town nor country was there any scientific attempt at sanitation in the modern sense. Hence the epidemics of plague which periodically decimated the people, frightening the rich to the isolation of their homes in the country, while the grass grew in the deserted streets, and the very dogs were masters of the deserted houses in which dead men were their sole companions. At the first sign that the curse had entered the family circle the ties of kindred were dissolved, and all who could fly turned from the hearth, cravens for dear life.[1]

The cottager's home was bare indeed of the least vestige of adornment, and of the rudest furniture there was very little. A few rough deal chairs and a table, and perhaps an oak chest of rude workmanship, that was all. The bed was a pallet of straw, and of woollen covering, which was very expensive, there was none.

In the early part of the century the builder of a house usually sought a hollow for the sake of the protection from the weather thus afforded. At a time when sanitation was unknown this added to the unhealthy character of the dwellings. But, as the century advanced, wiser notions prevailed, and the builder, whenever possible, deserted the valley for the hillside. During the same period the homes of the nobility came to reflect more and more the softening influence of foreign architecture. With the passing of feudalism and the era of petty wars the English castle ceased to be regarded as a fortress behind the walls of which it might be necessary at any moment to maintain a defence against turbulent neighbours. Under the strong hand of the Tudors the transformation which made the nobles country gentlemen rather than petty princes was completed. And the

[1] Evelyn's *Diary*.

embrasured walls, the frowning battlements, the flanking turrets were now for ornament rather than for warlike uses, and as such were often adorned after models found in Continental châteaux. There was, perhaps, an exception on the Scottish borders. There the law of might was still the law of the land, and stout walls and stout hands to defend them were the supreme law of property.

The decay of feudalism and the consequent modification of the castle brought many corresponding changes in social life. When the noble was a king in his own demesne, ruling his people with a rod of iron, the despot was also their father, and his castle was in some sense a home in which they had a share. In this way it came to pass that the hall of a great establishment was the chief apartment. The hall survived for some time its original use and the requirements which gave it its original character. At the beginning of the seventeenth century it was, however, beginning to disappear as the chief place of entertainment in the old baronial homes. Feudalism meant family life on a great scale, but when the serfs became tenants the change was soon reflected in an altered observance of the laws of hospitality, for the lord no longer kept open house.

The new influences created new conceptions of caste and class and a new desire for privacy. The hall thus gradually fell into disuse and was replaced by the dining-room, which was now decorated with the best furniture, china and plate.[1] Instead, therefore, of entering the hall and finding himself at once a member of the household, the stranger had now to wait for an invitation to the dining-room if his quality entitled him to the honour. When the hall was employed, tables set on trestles had been the rule, with chairs for the grandees and oak benches on which two or three could sit for those of inferior degree. In the dining-room the conditions were altogether different. It was smaller. It invited greater luxury in its decoration. The company being limited and select, both in manners

[1] *The Homes of other Days*, by Thomas Wright.

and dress, the introduction of fine fabrics was feasible. Rushes or, where the latest luxuries were patronised, coarse matting strewed the halls and were the carpets most appropriate to the motley crowd which mustered there from the stables, the farmyard, the pasture, the forest and the hunting-field. But in the dining-room rough stools of oak gave place to finely-polished chairs of lighter design, with loose cushions, and furniture generally began to show a corresponding tendency towards greater ornament and grace of outline.

The walls, when James came to the throne, were hung with tapestry at such a distance from the wall that the eavesdropper could easily accommodate himself behind it. At a time when the penal laws were rigidly enforced, when plots of one kind or another were being constantly hatched, when the malignity of the party in power could effect the ruin of those unfortunate enough to incur it, this tapestry played a benevolent part in the adventures of many a family. At the advent of an unwelcome visitor the priest or conspirator or outlaw vanished behind its welcome folds, which, closing noiselessly, conveyed no hint to the newcomer of the secrets on which he had stumbled.

The coming of James introduced a new sense of security and order. The succession was now regularly established, and there seemed no longer any room for dark conspiracies in favour of foreign claimants. The Catholics looked upon the son of Mary of Scotland as friendly to their faith and hoped for many advantages from him, which, though leaving them still far removed from equality with their fellow-subjects, would yet be grateful indeed after the rigid oppression of the preceding reign. Early, therefore, in the century we find the tapestry giving way to panelled walls adorned with pictures, and a little later rich frames became the vogue. The floors, which earlier were either bare or covered with coarse matting, were covered with oilcloth made of linen, taffeta or wool. Turkey rugs were used as tablecovers and for decorative

purposes, while the rooms were lighted with candles set in candelabra which were often very beautiful productions of the goldsmith's and silversmith's art.

The large open fireplaces of the Tudor period with their handsome fire-dogs and irons still continued to welcome the visitor to a prosperous English home long after the Tudors had passed away. The fireplace at its boldest had seats within it forming a cosy recess, which was the principal place in inclement weather. In the case of new houses, fashion tended to make fireplaces much smaller and without seating accommodation. The next step was the introduction of the metal grate, which stood detached from the masonry, a stage in its evolution which brought it appreciably near to the fashion of our own day. In nothing do we find modern taste more entirely different from that of the Stuarts than in the bedroom. It was generally overcrowded with furniture and indeed sometimes with beds. The bed was a huge four-posted structure of oak or mahogany, sometimes richly embellished and completely canopied with curtains. If the lady was ill or tired she felt no objection to receiving visitors in her bedroom.

The kitchen was sparsely furnished. Its cupboard contained only wooden or pewter vessels for the use of the servants and children. In town or country, wherever a family enjoyed any degree of comfort, they brewed their own beer, made their own candles and their own gooseberry and elderberry wine. In the town this was economy, but in the country it was an absolute necessity, since the roads to the market towns were often impassable, and when not impassable the distances were frequently so great as to make a visit to them a tedious and inconvenient undertaking.

The growth of trade had, by the close of Elizabeth's reign, called into existence a very large class who, if not wealthy, were people of comfortable fortune. For these homes had to be found that would resemble on a less

luxurious scale those of persons of superior rank. The villas built in London for this growing middle-class resembled, therefore, in their conveniences, the living apartments of the great houses of the nobility. In them would be found the entrance-hall, dining-room and kitchen, modelled on the lines of pretentious abodes, while a staircase and gallery led to the bedrooms above.

Every housewife had her spinning-wheel. It was indispensable to the cottager. To the gentlewoman it was recreation as well as employment, recreation not the less agreeable that it saved round sums to the family exchequer. The farmer's wife prepared the wool for the distaff, and when it was spun into thread some was sold, while some was woven at home into cloth for domestic use. Shopkeepers who bought the thread had it woven in their own looms. There was also the humble weaver who had his own loom and dealt in the cloth of his own manufacture. The undyed cloth was bought by foreigners, especially Flemings, amongst whom the art of dyeing had progressed far beyond the crude methods of the English craftsman. The colours were scarlet, blue, tawny, russet, grey and sadnew, and the industry gave employment to weavers, walkers, fullers and shearmen. The stuffs thus woven were serges, broadcloth, Dorset kerseys, single bays and cottons.

Chimneys, as has been said, were little used. Wood and charcoal were the usual fuel, though coal had for centuries been supplied to London from Newcastle mainly for trade purposes. As wood, however, grew scarce the value of coal had to be learned. A collier at the time was one who burned wood into charcoal. We read that the opening of an iron furnace near Brighton caused unhewn timber to rise in price from three or four shillings a ton to thirteen and fourpence a ton; while, sold by the load, wood increased from two-and-sixpence for that quantity to seven shillings. As wood grew scarcer the poor, especially in the country, suffered severely in inclement

weather. The faggots gathered in the woods were their mainstay, and in the woods they were too often trespassers and liable as such to punishment. Even the moderately well-to-do must have found their resources severely taxed when it was necessary to carry the winter's fuel over long distances.

Breakfast amongst all ranks was a meal of small consequence. Pepys tells us he breakfasted off bread and butter, sweetmeats and wine. Archbishop Sancroft approached more nearly to modern taste. He took coffee, and enjoyed a pipe of tobacco afterwards. Tea was not introduced until 1658, and was for many a year a luxury of great cost. The usual breakfast in a well-to-do household was of cold meat, oatcake, beer or wine, with milk, perhaps, for the children. But the poor had to be content with what they could get, which certainly would not include meat or oatcake or wine. The dinner-hour grew later as the century advanced, beginning at twelve and getting as late as two or three. The tables of the wealthy were laid luxuriously. There was a carpet tablecloth overspread with linen. The carpet and tablecloth gave place to bare boards in the case of the poor. Knives, spoons and small forks were used by the rich. But children and servants were not given forks, which only came into use in the reign of James I. Dinner consisted of many different kinds of meat. We find roast chicken, veal, mutton, beef, tongue, salmon, stewed carp, fish pies, goose and turkey served at one meal and all placed on the table together, with wine and beer as beverages. In this menu we find no mention of vegetables, which were held apparently in slight appreciation by those who could afford other fare.

The Restoration involved an important innovation as regards the serving of meals, the dishes being brought in one after another, and not as heretofore. This innovation, like all innovations affecting the manners of the community, made progress only very gradually. The Court and those

whose habits it directly affected were the first and quickest to adopt the French style, which other persons of the same rank, but farther removed from the centre of social influence, copied at leisure. Salt played an important part in the setting of a seventeenth-century table. It was placed in the centre and no one of inferior rank ever sat above it, while a man of superior rank would die of famine before breaking bread below it.

China and silver vessels furnished the tables of those who could afford it, while for those who could not there was wood and pewter. Dessert was called "banquet," consisting of fruit and other dainties and the choicest wines and liqueurs. Fruit culture was very imperfect, and as a consequence the supply was entirely dependent on the seasons. All classes drank great quantities; the rich wine, the less well-to-do beer or cider. The beer was made from barley, wheat and oats, sometimes from all three combined. Before the introduction of hops, pepper and spices supplied their place.

If money was scarce, and food, even of the coarsest, far from plentiful, the poor enjoyed at least one advantage over the rich, in that they could not afford to indulge in either doctors or medicine. To quacks of the meanest order they may perhaps have applied at times of great urgency; the meaner the more harmless. No remedy was too absurd in an age when superstition was rampant, and an old woman's tales were accepted as scientific truths by people who might have been expected to perceive their absurdity.

Thirty or forty ingredients or even more went to make up the potions prescribed by physicians. There were, however, apostles of simplicity. Andrew Boothe advised his patients to wash their faces only once a week and to enjoy vigorous health by using a scarlet cloth as a towel. Pills made from the skull of a man who had been hanged were considered very efficacious. Spring water drunk from the skull of a murdered man was another remedy

of subtle potency.[1] The entrails of wild animals were also included in the seventeenth-century pharmacy. We read of a great lady having her head shaved while pigeons were applied to her feet. Pearls and even corals were sometimes dissolved and taken as medicine by those who could afford to make such sacrifices for their health's sake. Twelve leaves of rue in the morning with bread and butter were ordered as a remedy for dimness of vision. "A safe medicine" was "a locke of your owne hair cutt as small as may be and so take it in beere or wine."

There was no quackery about the dentist. At the fairs he set up a booth, and whilst the cries of his patients were drowned in the laughter of the onlookers and the din of the market, he extracted their teeth, the spectacle being one of the attractions of the day. In speaking about medicine and disease it need scarcely be said that amulets and charms were worn against various maladies, whilst for the love-sick, as in the case of the Countess of Essex, there were love-philtres and charms and spells to solace their anxious hearts and make the course of true love run smoothly to the desired end, or as smoothly as might be

[1] Malcolm's *London*.

CHAPTER XIII

HOME LIFE AND EDUCATION, DRESS AND MANNERS OF GENTLE AND SIMPLE

IF in imagination one were to cross the drawbridge of some great castle of the seventeenth century and pass through the echoing archway into the courtyard, the living apartments would lie beyond, and there would be found the mistress with the affairs of a self-contained little kingdom on her shoulders. Domestic industry and ingenuity had, at the time, to supply a thousand wants which now give employment to numberless factories and numberless great emporiums. But having directed the spinning and the weaving, the chandling and the brewing, there was still for the lady of this splendid home the duties and pleasure of the nursery.

To-day the woman of wealth has countless attractions far removed from the hearth. In the days of the Stuarts social intercourse was restricted by the difficulties, expense and discomforts of travel, while taste, tradition, education and the pressure of duties which we know to have been far more numerous than in modern days, all tended to keep the woman of high responsibilities at home. But, though practically all life's joys and sorrows centred in the domestic circle, babies were not happy in proportion to their importance. The babe was swathed with its arms and legs tight to the body. The object was doubtless to strengthen the limbs, but the effect was quite the contrary, and it is not surprising to know that, in some cases, grown children were hardly able to walk. This fashion was in vogue amongst rich and poor, the only difference being, of

course, as to the quality of the material; and, sometimes, perhaps, to the advantage of the latter the material was not only rough but scanty as well.

Large families were the rule, but the children were indeed hostages to fortune too often harsh, for death carried off countless thousands of babes. Ignorance amongst all classes was the cause of this mortality and all its attendant misery. The children of the rich were coddled with too much clothing and enervated by being nursed by huge fires. The cradle of the period was of solid wood, sometimes richly carved. It was filled with feather-pillows, and woollen clothes were piled on to the unfortunate little inmate. The children of the poor were starved or half-starved, and were nearly always improperly fed. If they managed to escape small-pox they had to run the gauntlet of scarlet fever, measles, and other childish diseases at a time when these were far more deadly than at present. Consumption and kindred ailments which flourish in a climate like ours, when bodily health is low and sanitary conditions bad, also played their part in decimating the ranks of childhood.

In an age when servants lived their life with a family and were all more or less its friends, the nurse was more particularly held in esteem and affection.[1] When the children outgrew the need for her care, she still retained an honoured place in the home, a second mother whose love and fidelity rewarded at times of distress and sorrow the kindness so generously lavished on her. With loving eyes and homely dreams she watched the young people form ties that gave promise of a time when those who were so lately in the nursery would have nurseries of their own. Into her ear were whispered the secrets of mother and daughter, and by-and-by she would hear the baby-secrets of the grandchild, secrets of childhood told only to be betrayed to delighted parents and kindred.

Lessons were begun at an early age, the "Horne Booke,"

[1] *Memoirs of the Verney Family.*

containing the letters of the alphabet, first prayers, numerals and words of one syllable being an hereditary possession. The "Horne Booke" was so called because it was set in a frame with a covering of transparent horn, through which the children read. The "Horne Booke" would perhaps be best described as resembling a hand-mirror in outline. When it was necessary to turn over a page the sheet of horn could be taken out. Nowadays it is of small consequence if a book be reduced to tatters by some infant-foe to learning. But in the seventeenth century books were few and expensive and had to be used with due consideration for the needs of unborn generations.

The nurse taught the children their first lessons, and afterwards they passed into the hands of the tutor, who directed their studies until the boys went to college. For the girls there were a few private schools, but, as a rule, their education was finished at home, and must have been finished early, since they entered upon the duties of married life at fifteen or sixteen years old. Yet the education of girls of the upper classes was not neglected. Arabella Stuart had not greater advantages than other girls of her class. Yet she was, at least, as learned as the modern young lady of equal talent who has passed through a fashionable school. Latin was in some sense a universal language, and in the curriculum of a fashionable education was in consequence given much of the importance of a living tongue.

Evelyn records in his diary that he was not initiated into any rudiments until he was four years old. He was, in consequence, regarded as making a start with book knowledge rather late in life. Evelyn's son was a prodigy of learning. At two and a half years old the poor child knew his letters perfectly. At five he could decline nouns, while the eccentricities of irregular verbs were clear as morning to this baby-grammarian. This precocity may have been developed at a melancholy price, for the boy died while quite young and half the brightness of

the world was buried away forever from his father's eyes. Young Evelyn's must have been the fate of numbers of promising children, condemned to the glories of the schoolroom when they should have been playing or resting, only that all their laurels might wither above premature graves.

As education was confined to the well-to-do it is rather surprising at first sight to find that servants were often better educated than either master or mistress. The explanation is, however, simple. Servants of the better class were often the children of educated people with empty purses, such as poor clergymen. Servants, too, gifted with unusual intelligence often profited by the terms of intimacy which united the various members of the household to learn the lessons which the young ladies of the family would not trouble their heads to acquire. Thus if servants were occasionally treated with the severity which stern parents might deal out to their offspring, they enjoyed, at all events, some of the advantages of their servitude, being permitted to pick up accomplishments which enhanced their opportunities for advancement.

Mechanical toys, which are the delight of the modern nursery, in those days, needless to say, did not exist. There were, of course, hobby-horses and drums and dolls. For outdoor recreation boys had football, rounders, tennis and ninepins. The girls had their skipping-ropes and battledore and shuttlecock. Mother and nurse had to find such fare as they could for the imagination of the children, for story-books there were none. The seniors told their young charges the tales which had enthralled themselves when they were babes, and thus was nursery-lore preserved from generation to generation.

When the boy came to be thirteen or fourteen his parents tried to find him a bride if his position in life made his marriage a matter of great consequence. After marriage he went to the university, and then made the tour of the European capitals without which the education of an English gentleman was not complete. The history of

the times proves only too well that these early marriages were often fraught with misery for the unhappy victims. Separated at the most impressionable period of their lives, the boy-husband and the girl-wife often formed attachments which made it certain that the marriage-yoke would be a yoke of misery whenever it should be assumed. Thus when the time came for the young couple to settle down together they were often worse off than persons meeting as entire strangers. In some cases, however, these marriages of convenience worked admirably. Letters of the period often reveal husband and wife united by the tenderest and most poetical ties, the woman all love and solicitude, the man gentle, tolerant, loyal, a willing captive to the thrall of gracious wife and children.

In the days of the Stuarts the younger sons of the aristocracy went into the army, the navy, the law or the church. A post at Court or in the train of a distinguished courtier was considered the high road to fortune. For others of gentle birth there was trade, and it would be a mistake to presume that foolish notions of pride attached contempt to the victim of such necessity. The blood of an ancient family often coursed in the veins of a silk mercer, goldsmith, silversmith or linen-draper; the impoverished aristocrat frequently preferring to carve out for himself a career which held out the prospect of ultimate independence rather than waste his life, a pensioner on the bounty of his family, ever out-at-elbows. The good sense of such men added dignity and strength to trade, and abridged the divisions between class and class, with advantage not only to the social but to the political evolution of the nation.

The costumes of Elizabeth's time were continued at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Gentlemen wore a "stiff ruffe, long peasecod-bellied doublet and stuffed hose." Poor men wore russet and grey, and wore it darned and patched until one hardly knew the russet from the grey or grey from russet. As the reign advanced, short jackets, with short sleeves hanging behind, became

the vogue amongst the dandies, and very graceful was this addition to a cavalier's attire when the sleeves floated to the breeze, gay with silken lining.

In no aspect of life was the fossilizing influence of convention as yet the law. Men indeed wore what they liked, the depth of the individual's purse alone setting limits to the gorgeousness of his attire. Silk, satin, velvet, precious stones, gold and silver were all employed according to the taste of the wearer and the magnificence of the occasion. James lavished untold wealth upon his favourites, and much of the gold went to the adornment of their persons. If Whitehall of the early seventeenth century were by some miracle of necromancy raised up again, one might see gallants mustering there for some festival in doublets of cloth of gold, with cloaks of velvet, gaily lined, flung jauntily over one shoulder and held in position with a buckle set with brilliants. Jewels always gleamed on the great courtier's sword hilt, in his white beaver hat, fastening his plume, and on the buckles of his shoes.

The country gentleman, on the other hand, was obliged by the nature of his daily pursuits to be simple in his dress. Silks and satins would be out of place in the woods and fields. Coarse cloth with worsted stockings, leather shoes and broad-brimmed felt hat were at once more economical and comfortable. When he attended the Assize Court at the county town he donned the finest garb in his wardrobe to hold his own if he could against the bloods from town. The effect, however distinguished and pleasing to the eye of the rustics, was often exceedingly amusing to those who had just left London and were familiar with all the latest novelties in dress and deportment.[1]

Artisans wore garments similar in shape to those of the richer classes, with the exception, of course, of the ornamental garments, such as the cloak. While the shape was, in rough-and-ready fashion, the same, the quality

[1] *The Spectator.*

was naturally of the coarsest and cheapest. Craftsmen of all grades wore huge aprons.

Ladies of fashion wore their dresses quite high at the beginning of the century. Queen Elizabeth was at the end much too old to make a display of her neck and shoulders. But with the advent of a young Queen a reversal of fashion set in, and by the end of James's reign dresses were worn low enough to gratify the vainest owner of fair shoulders.

The hair was curled and frizzed, making pretty women, perhaps, a little less attractive, and making ugly ones grotesque. Decoctions of various kinds were drunk to obtain a pale complexion, while if colour was required, red paper supplied the necessary rouge. Imagination easily supplies reasons why the mask retained its popularity while other vogues changed. It played its part in political intrigues and in adventures of gallantry. In an age when manners were coarse it enabled the lady of virtue to keep her countenance in embarrassing moments; while in the case of the lady of virtue so easy that she could not be embarrassed it served the charitable purpose of concealing an unblushing front.

Pictures of the seventeenth century reveal the lady of the period garbed in the unlovely farthingale. This fashion, beginning in the natural desire of woman for graceful curves, ended in an extravagance that was more ridiculous than angles could ever be. When the fashion reached its climax a woman's hips resembled a plinth, heavily proportioned, and draped in gorgeous silks that enhanced the ugliness of the design. On this absurd pedestal was superimposed the upper portion of the English gentlewoman's body. To the native eye custom made the spectacle tolerable. Not so to the uninitiated. A story is told of a Sultana who was overcome with curiosity, not untinged with pity, lest English ladies were fashioned by Nature on lines similar to those suggested by the dress of the ambassador's wife. The diplomatists of the Porte

were no doubt able to obtain assurances which satisfied the Grand Seignor's lady that Nature was kinder to Englishwomen than Englishwomen themselves.[1]

The bigger the farthingale the greater the number of petticoats. The most slender figure was lost in billows of silk if its owner followed the height of the fashion. A lady of quality spared no expense in piling on embroidery. We read of a musk-coloured silk petticoat, shot with silver, and decorated with silver flowers, with a white fringe at the bottom, and an overfringe of gold. The musk-coloured garment was lost and the lady advertised for it. The advertisement, however, provides no clue as to the manner in which this singular calamity befell the fair owner. Servants and women of the humbler classes seem to have generally arrayed themselves in a red petticoat, a linsey apron, a red or yellow handkerchief across the shoulders, with a black hood when called out of doors, and a white hat.

The comfort of linen as wearing apparel was unknown to the Tudors. When the mighty Elizabeth lay down to rest, her nightdress was of velvet, and if this was the best Her Majesty could provide, it is not difficult to picture less important people taking their rest in even less agreeable raiment. The century was far advanced before linen underclothing became general among fashionable people. As usual in all matters of dress, contact with France refined and developed the innovation. Under the influence of Henrietta Maria the linen industry received a welcome fillip, but still the English workers were far inferior to the craftsmen of France. A list of Charles's clothes for the laundry included "ruffles, bandes, cuffes, handkerchiefs, caps, half-shirts, boot-hose, socks, sheets, pillow-cases, tablecloths, napkins and towels." We thus learn that the linen shirt had taken its honoured place in the scale of English civilization for those who could afford it, and that the fashion of the nightcap which dignified for so

[1] Malcolm's *London*

many succeeding generations the slumbers of the British citizen had been sanctified by Royal use.

In the matter of male attire the trunk-hose, worn in the early part of the century, was quite as ridiculous as the farthingale. The quality of the stuffing for the trunk-hose was a matter of taste, sometimes it would seem of eccentric taste. A story is told of a youth who had his hose stuffed with bran. While walking with two ladies he had the misfortune to come into collision with a nail and the bran poured out through the rent in a silent shower, to the intense delight of the passers-by, and to the unspeakable confusion of the victim of this most ridiculous misfortune and of his fair companions. An Act of Parliament forbade certain kinds of padding for the trunk-hose. The Act was enforced with some rigour, but the person charged under it enjoyed the advantage, if innocent, of being able to furnish an irrefutable defence. We read of a person, who was arraigned for being habited contrary to the statute, convincing the court of his respect for the law by showing that the suspected stuffing consisted of "a pair of sheets, two tablecloths, napkins, shirts and nightcaps."[1]

As the reign of Charles progressed the attire of the poorer classes and of country people underwent no change, but that of the aristocracy became more picturesque. Charles himself is familiar in a doublet of silk, satin or velvet, with large sleeves, a collar covered with lace, long breeches, fringed or pointed, meeting the tops of wide boots, and a broad beaver hat with plumes. A Spanish rapier, suspended by a sash over the shoulder and a short cloak flung rakishly behind, made up a figure the most graceful in the evolution of English costumes. The Cavalier to be in the height of the fashion should have long hair falling from beneath his feathered hat, and these tresses became in time the badge of a political party; the King's men, on the one hand, wearing their hair long, while his opponents

[1] Malcolm's *London*.

wore theirs cut short, from which they came to be known as "Roundheads." Simplicity in dress was, of course, the badge of the Saints. But at the Restoration luxury became more rampant than ever, and silk and satins and brocades worn by the Court gallants were again flaunted in the streets of London.

CHAPTER XIV

THE KING ON HIS THRONE AGAIN

"Here's a health unto His Majesty, with a fa, la, la,
Conversion to his enemies, with a fa, la, la.
And he that will not pledge his health,
I wish him neither wit nor wealth,
Nor yet a rope to hang himself, with a fa, la, la, la."

Old Song.

A STRANGER surveying the scene from the cliffs of Dover, early in the afternoon of the 25th of May 1660, would have beheld on all hands symptoms of joyous commotion. People of all classes streamed from the town to the sea-shore and to the cliffs, all eager to command a view of the waters of the Channel, heaving restlessly under the young summer sun. Along the sky-line was scattered a flotilla of warships gallant enough to rejoice the hearts of even Kentish men, and floating bravely above each craft the banner of England.

Close by the waterside stood a rich canopy, and around it the Mayor and Corporation, while a little apart a knot of grandees were gathered, amongst them the Constable of Dover Castle, where now the gunners stood by their pieces ready for their part in the doings of this famous day.[1]

Steadily the warships drew in-shore, and then at a given signal the Castle batteries thundered forth a salute that heard for miles around carried a joyous message to those not happy enough to see King Charles set foot once more on English soil. For this was the day of his coming.

[1] "England's Joy," *Harleian Miscellany*.

It was to greet him that cliff and shore swarmed with people whose cheering mingled with the cannonade as His Majesty entered his kingdom.

As soon as Charles had set foot on shore, one who might have prolonged his exile for many a day, taking precedence of Mayor and Constable and other notables, stepped forward, and on bended knee kissed his Sovereign's hand. He who thus did homage to his Royal master was General Monk, the stern and mysterious soldier whose policy had so baffled Royalists and republicans. Charles raised the General and with many gracious acknowledgments of his loyalty embraced him in sight of all the thousands. Then it was the turn of the Mayor and the other dignitaries to make obeisance, and while still the cannon roared and the people cheered, the King, with the Dukes of York and Gloucester, entered a coach and drove away towards Canterbury.

Coming to Barham-Down the King and princes left the coach, and mounting their horses rode on to the plain to review a little army of the men of Kent. There were drawn up to receive the King troops of horse consisting of the nobles and leading gentlemen of the county all richly apparelled, and at their head the Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Oxford, the Earl of Derby and Lord Winchilsea, Constable of Dover Castle, who had ridden thus far with the Royal coach. There were also several regiments of infantry, every man of them recruited within the borders of the county. Around the parade ground were multitudes of country people who roared themselves hoarse as the young monarch rode along the line of this little English army. At the head of each troop the King halted, whereupon officers and men bowed low, kissed the hilts of their swords, and then flourishing their blades cheered heartily for His Majesty, while the trumpeters put their hearts into a fanfare that made the very clouds ring with their notes of triumph.

It was on a Friday that Charles arrived at Dover.

FRANCES STUART, DUCHESS OF RICHMOND

FROM A MINIATURE AT MONTAGU HOUSE

From Friday night till Monday morning he lay at Canterbury, and then proceeded to Rochester. In the story of that eventful progress we read that when he arrived there the streets were hung with garlands, curiously made up of costly scarves and ribands, decked with spoons and bodkins of silver and small plate of various kind.[1] Gold, too, entered into these embellishments, chains of the precious metal being interwoven with the garlands, for there was no limit to the generous enthusiasm of the people. On Tuesday morning he left Rochester by coach, but as he approached Blackheath he took to the saddle, for here there was to be another review, for which the Life Guards had marched down from London. In those days every man was in some sense a soldier, or at any rate liable to military service, and from the fact that three corps of Merchant-adventurers mustered on Blackheath to welcome the King, it would appear that the profession of arms and the diligent pursuit of trade were by no means incompatible.

When the troops had saluted their King on Blackheath, the whole party, including the Life Guards and the Merchant-adventurers and some regiments of the line, proceeded to Deptford, where a hundred maids, all dressed in white, strewed flowers on the roadway beneath the feet of the exile now returned to his own.

Leaving Deptford and the white-robed maidens behind, Charles and his little army pressed on to Southwark. At St George's Fields His Majesty found awaiting him the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London in their robes. A large tent had been set up, hung with tapestry, with a chair of State under a rich canopy at one end. Here Charles rested while the various officers arranged the order of the procession into the capital.

First came the Life Guards, then the Sheriff's men, in scarlet cloaks laced with silver and carrying javelins. Richly garbed in black velvet coats adorned with chains

[1] "England's Joy," *Harleian Miscellany*.

of gold over their shoulders a company of mounted citizens occupied the next place in the procession. These princes of trade were attended each one by a footman wearing ribands of the colour of his master's guild. Then followed the City Council and certain noblemen, then the King's trumpets and the Heralds-at-Arms.

The Duke of Buckingham and General Monk preceded Garter-King-of-Arms, on the right of whom rode the Lord Mayor, carrying the Sword of State, and on his left a Gentleman Usher. Sergeants-at-Arms with their maces rode on either side of Garter and the Lord Mayor.

The part of the procession which immediately followed was that towards which every eye was turned. There rode three young men to see whom all these thousands had assembled. It was for them that the houses were hung with garlands, that rich carpets and rugs and tapestries were stripped from the *salons* of the aristocracy and merchants and spread upon balconies and porticoes. Swarthy as a Spaniard, the elder of the three beamed and smiled upon the frantic people. He was tired with long hours in the saddle, tired with receiving and paying compliments. But this sea of faces that spread before him as far as the eye could reach, everyone lighted with impassioned loyalty; the deep, continuous roar of welcome that surged around him, the eager hands stretched forth as he passed; the sky overshadowed with banners and garlands; the casements and façades of shops and mansions lost behind the privileged spectators who swelled the applause of the multitude; the whole made up a scene which might well call back the spirit of a dying man, if for a dying man it were enacted. But he for whom England thus laid bare her very heart was of all men the one most susceptible to such a tempest of emotion. To be pleased was the business of King Charles, and who would not be pleased to find himself thus welcomed in the land of his fathers which only a little while before seemed closed against him and his for ever?

On one side of Charles rode York, swarthy as his brother, but more thoughtful-looking. On the other rode Gloucester, a youngster of mettle, too much a boy to think, entirely happy that England had taken him to her arms and that a kingdom, fair and prosperous, would henceforth minister to his appetite for pleasure.

Equerries and noblemen rode in the rear of the Royal brothers; and last of all, five cavalry regiments.

It was half-past four when Southwark was left behind and the head of the procession marched over London Bridge into the City of London.

The windows of every house were alive with people, the streets were thronged, the walls adorned with costly fabrics. At many points bands played, the conduits ran with red wine; the ancient companies in their liveries with their ensigns unfurled, and the splendid trained bands, called to arms for this day, lined the route.

The multitudes pressing on the procession must have greatly retarded its progress. From London Bridge to the Strand occupied more than two hours. It was just seven o'clock as the brothers rode through an avenue of nobles and gentlemen and citizens in their rich coats of velvet and chains of gold, and, passing Charing Cross and under the deep echoing archway of the Holbein Gate, drew rein before the great entrance to Whitehall.

In the Abbey a little way off the clergy sang a Te Deum. The troops levelled their muskets and fired a volley of joy, and another, and another. And meanwhile the King and the Dukes had entered the home to which they had so long been strangers. The Restoration was accomplished.

But alas! the sunshine ended with the day. Every worthy, every chivalrous emotion of which the King's heart was capable, must have been stirred by the welcome home which his countrymen had given him. They had taken him to their hearts. They had adopted him as their son. His father's blood had watered the seeds of

loyalty, had made loyalty flourish until it had grown into a passion, and thus the people had scarcely set eyes upon their Sovereign, so gallant, so debonair, than they really loved him. The King had sound sense; he was naturally warm-hearted and chivalrous. As he laid his head upon his pillow that night, it was strange indeed if his heart did not register high vows to do unto England as England had done by him, to wear his mantle of Kingship in justice, to serve his country faithfully and well.

But if lofty vows the King had registered in the first hours of his Restoration they were doomed never to be fulfilled. The King was still very young. But already his life had passed out of his own keeping. A young married woman was mistress of his destiny, a woman supremely beautiful, but supremely wanting in all the nobler qualities of heart and mind. The woman who had already entered upon her vile part in the story of her country was Barbara Villiers. When she was but three years old her father had ridden away to the wars, and at the siege of Bristol the young cavalier received a mortal wound. Had Grandison lived his little daughter might have grown to be a wise maid, and, marrying in her own rank, have lived and died unknown to fame. But Barbara was to make history after a fashion new to England, and at sixteen she was already something of a rake.

Philip, second Earl of Chesterfield, then only twenty-four, was the flame that first attracted the damsel, and one of her letters to his lordship may still be read, in which she invited him to meet her at Ludgate Hill that she might enjoy his company for an afternoon. Barbara married a little later, but not the Earl. The bridegroom was Roger Palmer, a young gentleman of good family and fortune.

Roger took his bride abroad and the pair joined the procession of those who were then being drawn to the Court of the Royal exile, attracted by the ever-alluring prospect of the rising sun. Grandison's daughter was

made more than welcome by the man for whom Grandison had died. Barbara came and saw and conquered Charles. And when the King returned to his own she too returned to England to share in his inheritance.

As time went on the inner circle of the Court understood Madame Palmer's position well enough, though she still enjoyed her husband's countenance. But the public, delirious with joy because of the Restoration of the ancient regime, had as yet no notion of the place in the State filled by this young married lady.

But if Charles as yet managed his amours with some discretion, his brother James speedily became the talk of the town.

The winter before the King's Restoration, James, while in Holland, entered into a contract of marriage with Anne Hyde, daughter of the Lord Chancellor, and maid-of-honour to his sister, the Princess of Orange. It is not likely that the Prince could have kept his affection for Anne an absolute secret. But that they were bound by any tie that could reflect honour on the lady was never suspected, so deep and wide was the social chasm between them. At the Restoration Anne returned to London with her family and settled with them at Worcester House in the Strand. But the young maid-of-honour carried with her a secret that soon all the world should know, and when known she would be completely undone unless York stood manfully by her side.

If prying eyes lurked in the neighbourhood of Worcester House on the night of the 3rd of September, they would have witnessed strange comings and goings. At dead of night three gentlemen came thither and were admitted. One was York, the other was Lord Ossory, eldest son of the Duke of Ormond. The other was Dr Crowther, the Prince's chaplain, a plain man, but for this adventure as important as his master.

These gentlemen were ushered stealthily into the Chancellor's mansion. Sir Edward Hyde was a loyal man,

but he was also proud and ambitious. If he was awake his ears were closed. If he slept he slept soundly, while the conspirators climbed the stairs to make his daughter a princess of the Royal House.

Swiftly the intruders did their work. The indispensable Crowther joined Anne Hyde and York in matrimony. The chivalrous Ossory witnessed their vows. The wrong was righted. After that Royal wedding at dead of night the Chancellor's daughter might hold up her head and look the world in the face.

From lip to lip flew the tales told at times such as had now come for Anne Hyde. For what knew the town, as yet, of that scene in the small hours at Worcester House that gave this girl so slightingly spoken of a place on the steps of the throne, and made her unborn child heir-presumptive to the King of England? What the courtiers jested about to-day the citizens gabbled of to-morrow, for London was still a small town, with no great gaps between the classes, and the business of one was the business of all, more especially if it happened to be a scandal with entertainment in it. And surely there was entertainment and to spare when the lady who had pledged her honour to a Prince of the Blood was the daughter of the King's right-hand man, as though her family had not already lost enough in the Royal service. For already the town was adopting its manners to the tone of the gallants who had learned, while in exile, only to mock and to laugh. No longer was anything serious except, perhaps, cards at night, and the duel in the morning amidst the retired glades of Kensington.

But one thing was serious! It was the fell disease that periodically swept through the land, garnering to the pit the young and old, the fair and the homely, blindly indifferent to the lives of men. Small-pox was no theme for jest. It was with scared faces the courtiers heard that the King's youngest brother, Henry, Duke of Gloucester, was stricken with the dread malady. A few weeks after the

midnight wedding at Worcester House he was a dead man.

Happy it was for the Royal House that the Press of the seventeenth century was very different from that of the twentieth. It was not that the fever of politics ran high and that heads were at stake. The drama proceeding at Whitehall, a drama of love and of perjury, of plot and counter-plot, with scenes of comedy and tragedy following each other with swift surprise, as they will where Fate is the playwright, made an appeal more universal than politics could ever do. But the art of publicity was still in its earliest infancy, and the actors had no fear that the story would be told as it proceeded from hour to hour, told more or less faithfully according to the information and imagination of the scribes, and printed for the delectation of the kingdom and of the world at large.

We have seen Anne Hyde trembling in the shadow of disgrace and exposure. We have seen her lord make his way through the Strand at dead of night and, like a thief, steal into his lady's chamber, with a chaplain at his elbow. Then again the scene changed. In the Royal palaces voices were hushed, and men and women eyed one another with terror, fearful lest they should encounter hands or lips kissed by death, and share the doom of young Henry, Duke of Gloucester.

And still the end of the drama was afar off. A courtier, more solicitous for the dignity of the Crown than the King, essayed to ruin York's wife. This gentleman was Sir Charles Berkeley, captain of the Duke's guard, and a scion of a famous Royalist family. His companions were the Earl of Arran, second son of Ormond, Henry Jermyn, a famous coxcomb with a great conceit of himself, Dick Talbot, a devil-may-care Irishman, and Harry Killigrew, a man of wit and of pleasure, and the best company in town, as might be expected from a " notorious lyar."

Each of these men boasted to James of having been the recipient of some favour at the hands of " the lawyer's

daughter." Arran said he had consoled her in Holland when the vapours had withdrawn her from company. Talbot boasted of a meeting in the Chancellor's cabinet, and to lend a gloss of truth to his words said they had spilled a bottle of ink over State papers, for which the King's monkey was blamed. It remained for Killigrew to supply the climax. The others had but made the lady out a coquette; Killigrew boldly averred that she was without character, and that he had the best of reasons for knowing it to be so.

York seems to have heard these tales with the heavy heart of an honest lover. It was bad enough to have married a commoner's daughter, who was not even a great beauty, but it was cursed luck indeed that she should come to him without even a rag of reputation as her dowry.

In the midst of the commotion Anne's old mistress, the Princess of Orange, arrived in London. This lady had been a widow for about ten years. Many anxieties had weighed upon her during that time. She had made many sacrifices for her brothers during their exile, and might reasonably expect that they would consult her in matters touching her family pride. She would never consent that her one-time maid-of-honour should be publicly recognized as her sister-in-law. The Queen-mother shared her daughter's indignation, and she too came to London to prevent "the dishonour" of York acknowledging his marriage to the world.

By the end of October there was a little boy at Worcester House, and this grandson of the Chancellor, nestling in Anne's arms, was heir-presumptive to King Charles.

The Princess of Orange was the bitterest foe of the baby at Worcester House. But the hour of her chastening was now at hand. As Christmas approached the Princess sickened, and once more the Court was smitten with terror —for small-pox had laid the unhappy lady low. As she lay in agony all her pride of race and rank gradually fled and remorse seized her for her share in the misery that had

overtaken the young girl who once had served her. Speeding to eternity her attitude towards the world changed. The lamp of justice ceased to be obscured by pride, and her chief desire was that peace should prevail amongst those whom she should leave behind. And peace there was above her tomb. On Christmas Eve she died, and at midnight a few days later they laid her in Westminster Abbey.

To York Berkeley confessed that Killigrew had lied that he might bar the steps of the throne against the unworthy feet of a private gentlewoman. From motives of loyalty he had been ready to marry Anne himself, and be a father to her child, but His Highness would have his own wife and father his own child, now that he knew Truth could impute no stain to either.

When the Queen-mother heard the new turn that affairs had taken she exclaimed:

"If that woman enters Whitehall by one door I shall leave by another."

But Her Majesty was more courteous than her words, for a little later there was a reunion of the Royal family, when Anne Hyde was made one of them, and the famous drama ended when the Queen-mother kissed the lawyer's daughter.

CHAPTER XV

COMEDY AT LISBON AND TEARS AT WHITEHALL

AFTER that kiss the Queen-mother returned to France. London was indeed no place for a proud and sedate matron, with Barbara Palmer leading all the diversions at Whitehall, and the ideal courtier he who had most money or a beautiful wife to lose, and sacrificed either or both with equal nonchalance.

For fealty thus rendered Charles was pleased to dispense favours with royal liberality. In November the King ordered an Earl's patent to be drawn up for a young man upon whom had been thrust distinction in one at least of these ways, and Roger Palmer became Earl of Castlemaine, and his lady a Countess.

To queen it over this dissolute court where should English ministers go in search of a bride but to a convent in Portugal? Some writers say that Catherine of Braganza was beautiful, or almost so. Others that she was a fright. Whatever the truth may be as to the physical attractions with which Nature had endowed her, her good sense and stainless character are at least beyond the shadow of doubt, and one was destined to be as remarkable as the other in a Court where both were the scarcest qualities imaginable, and of all endowments those most cheaply held.

In making the proposal of marriage the Portuguese Ambassador said "that he was authorized to offer five hundred thousand pounds sterling in ready money as a portion for the Infanta, and likewise to assign over and annex to the Crown of England for ever the possession of

Tangier, a place likely to be of great benefit and security to the trade of England; likewise to grant to the English nation a free trade with Brazil and the East Indies, which they had hitherto denied to all nations but themselves; and to put into His Majesty's hands the island of Bombay, with its spacious towns and castles, which might be valued far above the portion in money."

The Earl of Sandwich was sent over with the fleet to conduct Catherine to England. High carnival greeted the English envoy, but an awkward hitch arose when the time for dull business came.[1] The five hundred thousand pounds which were to ballast the barque carrying Catherine to England could not be scraped together, the Queen-mother explaining " that in consequence of the late advance of the Spanish army she had been compelled to use the money expected for her daughter's portion in raising troops for the defence of the realm; so that she was only able to pay half the sum down, with which she hoped His Majesty would rest satisfied, pledging herself to pay the residue within the year."

But this was not the whole tale of embarrassment. The Queen-mother had put the best face possible on her misfortune when she said that only half the dowry was missing. Events proved that the other half was sadly incomplete, and Lisbon witnessed the droll spectacle of the ships which were to escort the bride to her husband being laden with merchandise, as though they were engaged in a great commercial venture. Bags of sugar, spices, and other products of Portuguese marts were stowed away on the warships lest King Charles should say that faith had not been kept with him, and send back his bride to her home as an article which had been exaggerated in value.

Catherine arrived at Portsmouth on the 13th of May 1661. But Charles was not there to greet her. He was much occupied in London with Mrs Palmer, and was con-

[1] Strickland's *Life of Catherine of Braganza.*

tent that the church bells of the capital should ring out a welcome. That night bonfires blazed and the town made merry, and so did the bridegroom, for he supped with Barbara, at whose door no fire burned. We may believe it was a dull party, for the Sultana was trembling for her future, and was arraying herself in her daintiest frocks and finest laces, as was noted by the gossips of the town, who enjoyed to their heart's content the preliminaries of the warfare of which Charles was the prize.

After celebrating with his light-o'-love the coming of his Queen, Charles turned his back on London and went to Hampton Court for his honeymoon. King and Queen had but enjoyed each other's society for a few days when Lady Castlemaine gave birth to a son in King Street. The boy was claimed by her husband. But the mother knew better, so she made him over to the King, who stood sponsor for him with Aubrey de Vere, Earl of Oxford.

The christening epitomized the new life of fashion. It was not necessary to conceal evil-living with a veneer of propriety. In France the King had learned his vices. But in France vice was vice, and Louis, himself, conducted his intrigues with some regard for propriety, protecting as well as a libertine could those standards of right and wrong which he knew to be essential to the well-being of the nation, however much his own conduct offended against them. But in England virtue no longer received even lip-homage. The standard of thought, as well as of conduct, was debased. The libertine, not content with the licence he arrogated to himself, denied that there was any honour or virtue in self-denial, and mocked at chivalry and chastity, not as ideals beyond the attainment of hard-drinking, hard-fighting Restoration gallants, but in the spirit of sworn soldiers of the Devil. Under the new dispensation all purity was not fled from the homes of England. An alliance of Literature, Art and Fashion cannot extirpate in a year or two the growth of centuries. But amongst the people who borrowed their opinions from the

Court and Stage the inversion of right notions must have been well-nigh universal. In France, libertinism was the occupation of hours stolen from great or at least sane pursuits. In England it was the great pursuit, and the first man in the kingdom had leisure for none other.

For six weeks Catherine was a real Queen, enjoying undivided supremacy in her new world. Catherine had probably some notion as to the true character of her consort. Hers was a singularly discreet entourage, if it included none who chattered unseasonably of the interesting events which had enlivened the Castlemaine household so soon after Her Majesty's arrival in England. There is generally somebody to confide such secrets to the ear of all others which should be protected from them. Palmer was a name that tripped easily off the tongue, and a knowing look at nothing, or at the King's portrait, perhaps, if there was one at hand, would tell this sensible Catherine all that was necessary to make her miserable. Not for long was the Queen to remain ignorant of the personality of the arrogant beauty from King Street.

The day on which Lady Castlemaine entered the Queen's drawing-room the courtiers and ladies gaped in astonishment. There was not one there, perhaps, but felt some emotion of curiosity, and, debased though many of them were, of disgust—all save one. And that was the Queen herself, the bride of a couple months, who, all unconscious of the sword above her head, beamed with proud contentment as one after another the ladies advanced to do her homage.

In her turn Lady Castlemaine approached Her Majesty, was received with a gracious bow, and curtseying, kissed the hand of the Royal bride. The Court wondered, doubtless, what breed of princess was this that encountered with a winning smile so deadly an insult.

But that was only the first scene in a swiftly-moving and thrilling drama. Charles had spoken Barbara's name indistinctly. Where every name was strange to her

the Queen hardly troubled to comprehend.[1] By-and-by she would learn the names worth remembering. Thus as Catherine saluted the imperious English beauty she had no other impression about her than that she was a strikingly handsome person, even amongst a crowd where few women were without pretensions to beauty.

But suddenly Catherine heard a whisper that froze the blood in her veins and blotted out from her sight the glittering scene. One of her Portuguese ladies had whispered that this was a notorious personage, and one whom the King should never have seen after his marriage, much less to have introduced her to the Queen.

And then came the second scene of the drama, one never perhaps witnessed before in a European court. The blood fled from the Queen's face. Her heart stood still. Flesh and blood could not endure this ignominy in a strange land before all these people, so coldly critical, so indifferent to her suffering, by whom the insult would be retailed all over the land and handed down in history. Stunned by the blow, Catherine fell to the floor, blood gushing from her nostrils, and thus was she carried from the apartment in presence of the gay crowd who had come there to see how she played the part of Queen, and assuredly had never thought to behold a scene so distressing.[2]

A little while before Charles had most virtuously condemned Louis XIV. for compelling his wife to endure the presence of a mistress. Now he proposed that Catherine "ought to make a proper reparation to Lady Castlemaine for having injured her reputation by a public insult, and that the poor lady had no other refuge from public contempt than the Queen consenting to receive her as a Lady of the Bedchamber." Charles, however, found that his consort had a spirit not easily cowed. She refused and Clarendon was obliged to interfere to make peace between the newly-wedded pair. Clarendon reminded Charles of

[1] Strickland's *Life of Catherine of Braganza.* [2] *Ibid.*

what he had said about Louis under similar circumstances.

To his minister Charles replied " that if he heeded such lectures, the country would think him in pupilage, and that Lady Castlemaine, as well as himself, would seem ridiculous, and therefore he should exact conformity from his wife, which would be the only hard thing he should ever require from her."

Clarendon, however, was unable to discover that what was wrong in Paris was right in London, or that what was cruel to Marie Thérèse could be construed into comfort for Catherine of Braganza. But the King was resolute, as resolute he could be where his own pleasure was the object pursued. On the same subject he wrote to Clarendon a little later:

" I wish I may be unhappy in this world and in the world to come, if I fail in the least degree of what I have resolved, which is of making Lady Castlemaine of my wife's bedchamber; and whosoever I find use any endeavours to hinder this resolution of mine I will be his enemy to the last moment of my life. You know how true a friend I have been to you; if you will oblige me eternally make this business as easy to me as you can, of what opinion so ever you are of, for I am resolved to go through with this matter, let what will come of it, which again I solemnly swear before Almighty God.

" Therefore if you desire to have continuance of my friendship, meddle no more with this business, except it be to bear down all false and scandalous reports, and to facilitate what I am sure my honour is so much concerned in; and whosoever I find to be my Lady Castlemaine's enemy in this matter, I do promise, upon my word, to be his enemy as long as I live."

Clarendon was naturally disposed to befriend the Queen. The Restoration beaux with their hand-mirrors and snuff-

boxes, their ribbons and laces, their boastful professions of vice, and their mad endeavours to live up to their profession, all disgusted the sober and dignified old cavalier, whose manners were those of the English country gentleman of an earlier and purer and sterner age. Nevertheless Clarendon yielded to the temptation that to the statesman is so often irresistible. He compounded with his conscience, sacrificed honour to ambition, and obeyed the King's behest that Catherine should be prevailed upon to take a more cynical, a more complacent view of His Majesty's failings.

The interview between the Minister and the Queen was full of delicate humour, humour of a kind that deepens the very pathos of tragedy. But such as it was neither could appreciate it because Catherine's feelings were too deeply wounded, while Clarendon had suffered too much for the Royalist cause to see without anxiety that the King cared less for England, and less for the dignity of the Crown, than for the seductions of a courtesan. Clarendon began by telling Catherine that he had come to say things that she might find unpalatable. The Queen, however, had a true instinct for an honest man and welcomed him graciously. The conversation, however, soon tended to shake her confidence in this respect, for the Chancellor, by way of reconciling her to his master's infidelity, remarked that her education " had given her little insight into the follies and imperfections of mankind, of which he presumed her own country could have given more instances than this cold country could afford."

The poor Queen might have smiled at this attack on the nuns, whose system of education fell so far short of what Clarendon thought essential in the interests of his Royal master. She could only reply with tears " that she did not expect to find the King engaged in his affections to another lady."

For one who had not his heart in the task Clarendon argued his point with skill. He asked Her Majesty " if

she imagined the King preserved his heart for many years for a consort he had never seen, and whether she believed, that when it should please God to send a Queen to Portugal that she would find that Court so full of virtuous affection? "

Catherine was devoted to her family and this attempt to excite sympathy for the King by reminding her that her brother might one day have to appeal for kindness under similar circumstances was not without effect. Clarendon, thinking that he observed a disposition to surrender, repeated to her the King's words, to the effect that " whatever correspondences he had entertained with other ladies before he saw Her Majesty concerned not her, neither ought she to inquire into them, as he intended to dedicate himself entirely to her; and that if she would meet his affection with the same good humour that she had been accustomed to do, she would have a life of perfect felicity. . . ."

This was only the beginning, but Catherine thought it was the end; and deeply injured as she had been, was touched, as generous and impulsive natures easily are, by any advance towards penitence. Clarendon, hastening to take advantage of the tenderness with which she had heard the King's message, ventured to breathe the real object of his visit, which was that the injured wife might receive the Countess of Castlemaine as a lady of the bedchamber.

But Clarendon had misjudged the character of the woman to whom he had come on this strange embassy. When she realized that he had come, not to obtain pardon for the King, but to heap further insults upon her, all her softness vanished, and she was once more the proud and sensitive princess who had fallen down before the whole Court as though a blow to her honour were a blow struck against her very life. Clarendon reminded her that in Portugal there would be no welcome for her were she to return there in quest of sympathy in her quarrel with

the King, who might, indeed, if he chose, deny her even that satisfaction, and detain her in England against her will. But arguments and threats were alike in vain, and in the end Clarendon had to go without obtaining from Catherine the promise he desired.

That night Whitehall was thrown into commotion by the noise of a furious quarrel between King and Queen. Those in attendance in the vicinity of the Royal apartments heard their prince and his consort scold at each other like a pair of fishwives.[1] The Queen cried out that she would go back to Portugal. At that hour Charles was not in a mood to soothe the young termagant's wrath. Taunt was answered with taunt. He doubted, he said, whether her mother would receive her if she returned to Lisbon. What hurt her more deeply still was the King's threat to send back her Portuguese servants. The Queen loved her family too well to embarrass them by returning home. Moreover, she was well endowed with the homely sense which admonishes one to make the best of what is irreparable, and this marriage of hers, entered into of her own free will, was a compact that, as a good Catholic, could, she knew, be riven only by the hand of Death. For good or ill she was wedded to England, for ill it seemed, and under the circumstances to be deprived of the companionship of her Portuguese ladies would be an overwhelming misfortune.

"The passion and noise of the night," says Pepys, "reached too many ears to be secret the next day, and the whole Court was full of that which ought to have been known to nobody, the mutual demeanour of the Royal pair confirming all that could be imagined of their dissension. They spoke not, they hardly looked on one another. The Queen sat melancholic in her chamber in tears, except when she drove them away by more violent passion in choleric discourse; and the King sought his diversion in company that said and did all things to please him, and

[1] Pepys's *Diary*.

there he spent all his nights, and towards morning disturbed the Queen's repose by coming to her chamber, for he never slept in any other place."

Charles now behaved in the manner that one would least expect from a good-natured rake. He studied to heap mortification upon the unfortunate lady who, far removed from friends and kindred, was entirely dependent upon his smiles for her happiness. The King's smile or the King's frown is ever a cue to the courtier's deportment, and Catherine, during those days of warfare, must have learned in unforgetable bitterness how grevious life within a palace may be. Where the King was her enemy who would dare to be her friend! In the unequal conflict her conscience was her only mainstay, and this she declared forbade her to admit Lady Castlemaine into her service. No punishment was too heavy for this defenceless woman who stood up so firmly for the right, and Charles was base enough to upbraid her with the failure of her family to furnish her marriage portion in the manner stipulated, though the period of grace allowed had not yet elapsed.

The issue of the conflict could hardly ever have been in doubt. The only doubt could be as to whether the Queen would take her defeat like a Griselda or seek consolation in the vices of her persecutors. This problem of character, of psychology, of temperament, was solved in the fulness of time, and Catherine remains a classic example of a lily raising its stainless front in the midst of the most adverse surroundings. She put aside her pride, she compounded with sinners but not with sin. And in due course she might be seen laughing in the society of the Lady Castlemaine, though how that miracle was brought to pass no man knows.

Henceforth Catherine seems to have acquiesced in her own deposition and was resigned that she, at all events, the rightful mistress, should not be mistress of Whitehall. But not content with her abasement the King's bosom

friends took upon themselves to undo her utterly. They would divorce the Queen, and of those who made this their policy, the most daring, the most unscrupulous, the most brilliant was George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham.

CHAPTER XVI

HIGH WORDS AT MIDNIGHT

WHILE the pursuit of pleasure engaged all the energies of the Court the country suddenly drifted into war with the Dutch. The conflict was carried on with varying fortune, only to end in utter discredit to the British, for the enemy came up the Thames, burned the shipping at Chatham, levied toll on the surrounding country, and penetrating as far as Gravesend struck terror to the heart of the capital itself.

At the same time another war was in progress that probably caused Charles greater discomfort and anxiety. In this the belligerents were Lady Castlemaine and the Earl of Clarendon. When the vicissitudes of the struggle with the Dutch disheartened the people they cried out that they were betrayed, and the Countess had the gratification of seeing Clarendon branded by the indignant populace as their betrayer. They broke his windows, tore up his garden, and erected a gibbet before his door.

His enemies were not limited to the King's mistress and the mob. The courtiers hated him, not because Lady Castlemaine hated him, but because his manners were sedate and his life orderly. He was out of the fashion, and, what was perhaps from their point of view still more damning, he was out of it because he despised it and them.

The Commons, for different reasons, desired his downfall. His cast of mind was that of an earlier generation of statesmen. The revolution had altered radically the unwritten constitution. The King had lost the power to

rule through one individual of great ability and ambition, or even of ambition without nobility. The era of the Somersets and Buckinghams and Straffords was gone for ever. But Clarendon did not see it, was incapable of seeing it. He was a King's man, heart and soul, in the sense that he would himself be a King by the favour of his Sovereign. The Commons were jealous of his power, jealous of his ambition. A mere coxcomb they might have tolerated as Vice-King, but not a born autocrat, whose sufferings in the Royal cause, added to his ability, industry and sobriety made him a formidable opponent of popular pretensions.

But though so many influences combined against him, the Chancellor's ultimate ruin is ascribed to the love-adventures of a butterfly maid-of-honour, a very young and ravishingly beautiful creature who filled what was in some sense the part of a Helen of Whitehall. "La Belle Stuart," as they called her, whose portrait is to-day familiar to the world as Britannia on the coinage of England, had turned the heads of all whose heads were at the mercy of susceptible hearts—that is to say, she had turned the head of the King himself.

Frances Stuart was a daughter of Walter Stuart, Lord Blantyre, endeared to the Royal family by services befitting one of their kindred. Blantyre, during the troubles of the preceding reign, had fled to France, and there his daughter acquired the elegance and charm of which Versailles was the school, famed throughout the world.

Lord Blantyre was attached to the household of Henrietta Maria, and young Frances grew up a favourite at the Court of the widowed Queen, and no less a favourite at the Court of France. At the Restoration, Louis XIV. desired to preserve to his own country so fair a jewel. He wished to marry her into his own nobility, with a portion out of the Royal Exchequer. It was not to be, however. Frances preferred to remain a Briton,

and coming to England was appointed maid-of-honour to Queen Catherine, and at Whitehall speedily became the envy of the ladies, the idol and toast of the gallants.

On her first appearance at Court she was only fifteen. Pepys saw her ride in the Park with the King and a troop of ladies. She wore "a white-laced waistcoat, a short skirt, and hair *à la négligence*, crowned with a hat and red feather." Amongst the party was Lady Castlemaine, who looked very beautiful, but she was on this occasion totally eclipsed by the King's radiant young kinswoman, and in consequence "looked mighty out of humour." Well she might, for Charles was literally dazzled by this girl who, without desiring it, had become her rival. "Her sweet eyes, little Roman nose" and general air of loveliness and breeding enchanted the diarist, who followed the cavalcade to Whitehall, eager for another vision of such fresh and joyous girlhood.

Charles had not the privilege of making unrivalled warfare upon the heart of one so fair. The courtiers, intoxicated with a passion that spared none, threw prudence to the winds, and forgetting the first principles of their trade, would match themselves against His Majesty himself for the conquest of such a prize.

But the fair head that inspired such folly was not itself all folly. Frances played with fire, but possessed the magic that made her proof against destruction. Hers may have been perfect art or perfect artfulness, but whichever it was, King and courtiers found it their delight and despair.

While turning everybody's head nobody had power to make the fair Stuart's pulse beat more rapidly. Other belles played with hearts. She played with dolls, but caused more havoc than any of them. Blind-man's-buff delighted her. While the rakes of the Court, male and female, gambled for fortunes, Frances too was fond of cards, but she only used them to build castles.[1] The

[1] Grammont's *Memoirs*.

gallants who found their happiness in her smiles built castles too in emulation of one another, eager for her praise, or waited on her, handing her the materials for her flimsy architecture.

Charles seems to have found this passion for castles of cards rather tedious. He preferred to get into quiet corners with Frances as his solitary companion, and there boldly pay court to the girl who, however she may have been flattered by such attentions, kept her heart proof against all the assaults of her august lover.

On the authority of Pierce, the surgeon, Pepys recorded that the King "do doath upon Mrs Stuart only" and "dallies with her openly, and then privately in her chamber below, where the very sentrys observe his going in and out, and that so commonly that the Duke or any of the nobles when they would ask where the King is, they will ordinarily say, 'Is the King above or below?' meaning with Mrs Stuart."

The Queen herself found her consort's tenderness for her maid-of-honour more disconcerting, in some respects, than more guilty attachments. Her Majesty sometimes stopped before going into her dressing-room lest she should surprise the King dallying with Frances. It would appear from this that Her Majesty had learned her lesson well. Indifference had perhaps made resignation easy. But this was not a case for indifference, nor yet for resignation. The coquetries of Frances, the spells she cast upon the King, were fraught with deadly peril for the girl herself, but peril deadlier far for the Queen. For it suited men to whisper that His Majesty should have a new wife, and that here was one worthy to be the First Lady in the land.

Had Heaven blessed her with children not all the demons in the inferno could have shaken Catherine's position. What the country wanted was security, and the way to security and stability was a babe at Whitehall. But time passed away and no tenant made his appearance

in the Royal nursery; there came no Prince of Wales to be his mother's shield with baby hands against all her enemies.

The next heir was York, and his children were Clarendon's grandchildren. Rather than that they should succeed to the throne a host of enemies arose who would depose Catherine, and put in her place a Queen whose progeny would bar James and the lawyer's daughter from the succession.

To a man of the King's temperament it is impossible to doubt that release from his marriage vows would have been welcome, could it have been accomplished without inflicting ignominy and misery upon the Queen. But there was no royal road to so disgraceful a perjury; and Charles, too indolent to be a consummate scoundrel, even in his pleasures, would none of it.

Clarendon's enemies were not, however, resigned. They hoped that circumstances would arise which would enable them to force the King's hand, and bided their time. At length the climax came, through Lady Castlemaine, and Clarendon and Frances Stuart vanished from Whitehall.

The Countess had at first employed the young beauty to amuse Charles; but now she was half-crazy with jealousy because the King lived for her alone, and because on the morrow Frances might not only fill the King's heart, to the exclusion and great loss of all other idols, but might likewise share his throne.

In a very ill-humour the King returned one night to his apartments from visiting Frances Stuart. He was growing a little impatient in his pursuit of his divinity, and his love was growing with his impatience. The castles of cards, built only to be thrown down again, were in some sense symbols of his own tantalizing story.

Charles did not find the Royal apartment unoccupied. Who should be there waiting to salute him but his old flame Barbara!

Barbara had friends in the King's household who abetted her scheme, otherwise she had not gained admission to the Royal presence at such an hour, and at the very moment which fitted in with her scheme for destroying in Charles's eyes the credit of the girl who had supplanted her.

"I hope," said she, "I may be allowed to pay you my homage, although the angelic Stuart has forbidden you to see me at my own house."[1]

The King was in no mood to listen patiently to such taunts. But Barbara was not to be driven away by a surly brow.

"I will not make use," she continued, "of reproaches and expostulations, which would disgrace myself. . . . I come now, therefore, with no other intent than to comfort and to condole with you upon the distress and grief into which the coldness, or new-fashioned chastity of the inhuman Stuart, have reduced your Majesty."

Pleased with her own irony the visitor burst into mocking laughter. The King's scowl grew blacker. But Lady Castlemaine had nothing to fear from his wrath. It was of Miss Stuart she was afraid, and whom she was there to vanquish.

"Be not offended," she continued, "that I take the liberty of laughing at the gross manner in which you are imposed upon. I cannot bear to see that such particular affectation should make you the jest of your own Court, and that you should be ridiculed with such impunity. I know that the affected Stuart has sent you away, under pretence of some indisposition . . . and I come to acquaint you that the Duke of Richmond will soon be with her, if he is not there already.

"You do not seem," continued the Countess, "to believe what I say, imagining it must be prompted either through resentment or envy. Only follow me to her apartment, either that, no longer trusting calumny or

[1] Grammont's *Memoirs*.

malice, you may honour her with a just preference, if I accuse her falsely, or if my information be true that you may no longer be the dupe of a pretended prude, who makes you act so unbecoming and ridiculous a part."

The King's jealousy was aroused by the mention of Richmond's name. He could not rest until he had put this charge to the test and knew the bitter truth, whether the King had been beaten in the lists of love by one of his own Court. Barbara noted her advantage. She took His Majesty by the hand and led him towards a private door opening from the King's apartments on to the gallery, where Miss Stuart was lodged.

Barbara watched him pass through this door into the gloom of the gallery beyond. What would she not have given to have been able to follow at his heels; to have seen the adorable Stuart and Charles face to face, with Richmond in the background cursing the fancy that had lured him to such confusion from the bottle, hitherto his only love, freely courted without peril or embroilment.

The King encountered first of all his fair lady's chambermaid. This girl knew her duty to her mistress, and opposed his entrance as long as she could.

" My mistress," she said, " has been very ill since your Majesty left her, but now being gone to bed, she is, God be thanked, in a very fine sleep."

So very fine a sleep following so happily upon so sudden and distressing an illness the King would behold with his own loving and delighted eyes! Charles moved forward. The serving-maid, filled with alarm, bravely posted herself in His Majesty's way, ready to bar his advance as long as a poor menial might. But that was not for long. Charles brushed past her, and having done the best she could against the monarch she could but commend her mistress to Heaven, and wish the jealous King at the devil.

But neither blessings nor maledictions availed to avert the catastrophe, for in a moment the King was out of sight, having passed through the door which screened the great secret.

The maid-of-honour was not in so very fine a sleep after all, unless she slept with her lovely eyes wide open. It was true enough she was in bed. But if she had been ill, it was strange that the physician seated by her pillow was one hitherto unknown for his achievements in the healing art. Her companion was the Duke of Richmond.[1]

Never, perhaps, in his whole life had Charles felt such anger and humiliation as at that moment. If his ships had been sunk, his towns sacked, his soldiers and sailors beaten and disgraced, Charles might have been reduced to seriousness, even to sorrow. But what army, what fleet, what town so precious as this fair girl! What humiliation more bitter than that with all his advantages as a lover, with all his wit and charm and knowledge of the female heart, with all the advantages of a crown to multiply his attractions in the eyes of a vain, proud and ambitious girl, he should nevertheless be fooled in his own house and defeated by one of the least likely beaux amongst his courtiers.

In the transports of his rage Charles looked towards the window! The Thames flowed beneath! Richmond followed that significant glance and understood. Without hesitation he chose the door, and retired without answering a word to the torrent of menaces hurled at him by the Royal intruder.

Then it was a duel between the King and the maid-of-honour, who "having recovered from her first surprise, instead of pitying herself, began to talk in the most extravagant manner, and said everything that was most capable to inflame the King's passion and resentment; that, if she were not allowed to receive visits from a man of the

[1] Grammont's *Memoirs*.

Duke of Richmond's rank, who came with honourable intentions, she was a slave in a free country; that she knew of no engagement that could prevent her from disposing of her hand as she thought proper; but, however, if this was not permitted her in his dominions, she did not believe there was any power on earth could hinder her going over to France and throwing herself into a convent, to enjoy there that tranquillity which was denied her in His Majesty's court. . . ." [1]

Charles listened to this tirade with mingled emotions. Could this be the architect of castles of cards, the capricious and dainty heroine of so many comedies, who thus dared to scold at the King with the temper of a young fishwife? At one moment her taunts stung him to anger. At another he was melted to pity by her hysterical distress. At length anger and pity, combined, served to add fuel to his love, and he was about to fall on his knees to plead for pardon for the pain he had caused her when she launched at him an arrow tipped with deadly poison, an arrow taken from the quiver of most unpalatable Truth.

"She desired him to retire and leave her in repose, at least for the remainder of that night, without offending those who had conducted him to her apartments by a longer visit."

This reminder of his degrading servitude to the thrall of Lady Castlemaine left Charles dumb with rage, and perhaps with something of shame and sorrow too. And turning on his heel he flung out of the room vowing never to see her more.

After that the question of State that exceeded all others was the condition of Frances Stuart's heart. Charles II. would have given up the Three Kingdoms to be her favoured lover, with perhaps a proviso that he should have them back again when one fairer should appear on the scene. The girl herself had by this time awakened to the dangers of her position. The story goes that she

[1] Grammont's *Memoirs*.

declared her readiness to marry any gentleman worth one thousand five hundred pounds a year in order to escape from a Court where her presence was fraught not only with danger to herself, but invited the absolute ruin of her Royal mistress.[1]

Release came in defiance of the King through the nobleman whom he had banished. One night, in March 1666-67, a lady stole out from Whitehall and made her way to a tavern in Westminster. There she was welcomed by a gentleman who had horses in waiting. With tender solicitude the cavalier helped her to the saddle, saw to the girths, and handed her the bridle. Then he sprang upon his own horse and together they turned their faces to the South. On and on they spurred into the night, riding as people do who will not turn back, for this was not an assignation, it was an elopement, and the lovers were Frances Stuart and the Duke of Richmond. Next morning his Grace's chaplain made them man and wife at his patron's home, and the King was told that the lady he loved was his kinsman's bride.

The happiness of Frances was the ruin of Clarendon; for his enemies said that he had robbed Whitehall of its fairest ornament, and made desolate his master's home; that the chief inspirer of the elopement had been the austere and venerable Chancellor. Charles could forgive his minister a thousand backslidings, and what was more to the point, could forgive him his loyalty, his sincerity in the Royal service, his impatience of his profligate surroundings, but to thwart His Majesty about a lady was the crime irreparable. And so Clarendon lost his last friend.

The Chancellor's share in the elopement probably went no farther than an attitude of inactive benevolence towards an enterprise that would put an end to the divorce-policy, or would, at all events, remove from the King's path a powerful temptation to alter his mind towards it.

[1] Grammont's *Memoirs*.

But even inactive benevolence in such an affair was treason, and so the veteran cavalier fell.

To the King's face Clarendon told him that he would not resign. Was he to be disgraced to conciliate such a woman as Lady Castlemaine; to please a gay trifler like Buckingham, to whom Crown and politics were but a jest! But the time when he could be of service had passed, and Clarendon had to learn, as every minister will who would drain to the dregs the chalice of power, that he who will not in the end be dismissed by his master must shield himself from that humiliation by dismissing himself.

It was on the 29th of August 1667 that Clarendon ate of the Dead Sea fruit that grows for every statesman in office, and which he must partake of if to office he clings but long enough. On that day he surrendered the Seals.

When the Chancellor went to the King for the final interview Lady Castlemaine had not yet risen. Like wildfire the news flew from lip to lip that the end of Hyde's day of power had come, that for the last time he had come to look upon his master's face.

Lady Castlemaine leaped out of bed at the joyous news and "ran out in her smock to the aviary overlooking Whitehall garden; and thither her woman brought her nightgown, and stood gazing herself at the old man's going away; and several of the gallants of Whitehall, of which there were many staying to see the Chancellor's return, did talk to her in her bird cage."

One of the gallants told her she was "the bird of Paradise." Presently Clarendon returned and then "the bird of Paradise," in her nightgown, scolded at him in the coarsest language, while the dandies, who had gathered in haste to see the exit of the fallen statesman, made merry at her part in the drama of the day.

The Commons pursued him with a motion for impeachment, but the Lords threw it out. Still the old man held his ground, and it was only in obedience to the command of the King that he at length left the country, and re-

turned in his old age to exile. Then, barred forever from the Council-chamber, he took up his pen and opened his books, and wrote the story of his own times which, above all his other deeds in Court or Senate, have made his name immortal.

CHAPTER XVII

GEORGE VILLIERS, HIS FATHER'S SON

CARELESS, reckless, handsome, brave as a lion, capricious as a spoiled beauty, without reverence for anything of earth or heaven, without a spark of deep or honest love for any creature, such was the chief of those who rejoiced over Clarendon's fall. Such was George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham.

Charles I. had shown his regard for the children of his murdered favourite by having them educated as his own. When the Civil War broke out there was for a Villiers no choice of standards. Young George and his brother Francis left Cambridge to enlist under the Royal banner, and both were present at the storming of Lichfield. Their mother was indignant that her two boys should have been allowed to risk their lives at an age when she, at least, thought no such sacrifice could be expected from them. She therefore placed them under the guardianship of the Earl of Northumberland, who sent them abroad to complete their studies. They returned in 1648 to find their Sovereign and benefactor a prisoner in the Isle of Wight, and joining the Earl of Holland, shared in the disastrous affair of Reigate, where young Francis Villiers gave his life for the cause.[1]

His horse was killed under him as he charged with his troop. With his back to an oak tree, he turned at bay, and if valour could enchant, the spreading branches would have enfolded the youth from his enemies. Fighting like a young lion Francis would not ask for quarter, and his

[1] Clarendon's *Rebellion*.

enemies would not offer it. Till his right arm failed him he held his ground, and when at last he lay down beneath the sheltering oak, the gallant boy had been well-nigh slashed to pieces. He breathed his last where he had fallen, and in the bosom of the oak that had been his friend in that hopeless fray the letters " F. V." were carved, and remained for many a year a monument to the worthiest of his line.

The Duke was allowed forty days in which to surrender, but he preferred to follow the fortunes of Charles, and at twenty-one he found himself despoiled of his estates, valued at twenty-five thousand pounds yearly—a heavy price for a young man's loyalty.

The reckless spirit could not rest content with mere safety. To relieve the monotony of exile he drifted hither and thither, coquetting with death on the scaffold or on the field.

In this way the apprentices and porters and ostlers, passing to and fro, in the neighbourhood of Charing Cross, were much diverted during the early days of Cromwellian rule by a mountebank with a patch over one eye, who gave imitations of great people and sang about them songs of his own composition. This vagabond, with a nimble tongue, to whom no jest was too audacious, had an orchestra of violins to enliven his entertainment, while a party of low comedians amused the groundlings who could not appreciate the more subtle flavour of the poet's satire. The hero of this street stage was none other than the young Duke of Buckingham, and the ballads in which he ridiculed personages and policies were frequently pointed with allusions to himself.

At this time it was arranged that Mary Villiers, his sister, should be carried from Whitehall, where she was detained a prisoner, to Windsor. The Duke was very fond of Mary, and had availed himself of his disguise to communicate with her, though at some risk to himself. Now he resolved to see her face to face before she should leave

London, and setting up his stage at Charing Cross he waited for her coming, trusting to his wit and address to attain his end.

Presently the guards clattered out of the Holbein Gate, in their midst Mary Villiers in her coach, and in a moment they were abreast of the mountebank of Charing Cross. The lady wondered doubtless what meant the rabble gathered round the platform that served as a stage, until her glance rested upon a debonair vagabond with a patch over one eye.

What was Monsieur of the Patch saying? Calling on her guards to halt, that he had a song specially made to entertain them, and would sing it to them if they would kindly give him their attention. Mary may have felt a little anxious lest these rough-and-ready Roundheads from the slums and mews should cut short her morning's drive, and indeed her life, in spite of her armed escort. That might be the design of the fanatic with the evil Patch! But whether she was apprehensive or merely amused, whether she would go or stay, she had no choice. The guard chose for her. They would hear the ballad to lighten the road for themselves, or perhaps to make it heavier for the lady. . . .

When the ballad was sung, nothing would please the singer but to sell his wares to the lady, and, to the delight of the mob, he descended from his stage and made his way to the door of the coach. Soldiers and people looked on with glee to see the great lady baited for their diversion. But within the comedy there was a lightning-comedy hidden from the eyes of all save the actors. For an instant His Grace moved the patch that disfigured his countenance. Only for an instant, but it sufficed. And while the mob howled with enjoyment at the fancied insult, the fallen aristocrats knew that the subtlest essence of the joke was purely their own.

The Duke threw into the coach his songs, and with them a packet of private papers intended for his sister's eye

alone. But His Grace had not done. For him it was a morning of rare diversion, and he would miss no scintilla of the sport. As the coach drove off the crowd ran behind, jeering at the fair occupant; and hallooing with the roughest and boldest, the keenest huntsman of them all, laughing in his sleeve, was her fond brother, the Duke of Buckingham.

To such an adept in disguises the journey to or from the Continent presented no terrors. Tired of a mountebank's life, he retired for a while to the Court of the exiled prince. But that was as dull, duller even than London, for money was scarce, and a full purse alone made the sun shine for George Villiers. To the great satisfaction of Hyde His Grace betook himself to the battlefields in which France and Spain were contending for supremacy. In the French camp Buckingham found kindred spirits. There fighting was a recreation, cards and dice the serious business of life. It would seem that every rascal in France had turned chevalier, and the fellow who could lose or win a fortune without turning a hair was alone good company for gentlemen. If, in addition, he could make love like a troubadour, and tell a wicked tale at the cost of a more or less honest gentlewoman, then was he the darling of his regiment. In all these qualities the chivalry of France excelled, but George Villiers was a kindred soul, more French indeed than many a born Frenchman, and in their company he held a place of honour.

In their turn the gaming-table and the trenches became wearisome to this effervescing spirit. A disastrous action at Valenciennes gave Buckingham his fill of fighting, and leaving the banner of France to the custody of other champions, he quitted the army and set up in Paris.

In the capital he fell into the hands of sharpers, who relieved him of gold he could ill spare, and neither sadder nor wiser for his misfortunes his thoughts turned once more towards England, and hopeful of retrieving his fortunes in

his native land, he shook from his feet the dust of France and steered for Dover.

A large part of Buckingham's inheritance had been granted to Lord Fairfax. In accepting the grant, this gallant and chivalrous nobleman probably never dreamt of enriching himself permanently at the expense of a fallen family, one above all that was his kindred. Buckingham was, of course, well aware of the generous and upright character of the Parliamentary general.[1] It was therefore with perfect confidence in the reception awaiting him that, on arriving in England, His Grace threw himself on the hospitality of that gallant nobleman.

Buckingham, having reached London, suddenly disappeared. Spies hunted for him high and low, but their employers may have known more than their tools, for the Parliament had no desire to distress Fairfax about so light a trifle as Buckingham's head. It was indeed whispered that he was a traitor who sold the Prince's secrets, if any he held that would command a sale. He had certainly entertained his friends in the French camp with unmeasured abuse of Charles. But he was also said to have sworn a desperate oath to kill the Lord Protector if he could not make terms with him. Ever ready to swear or pray at any shrine, reckless as to what he said or left unsaid, so that he pleased himself and displeased his enemies, George Villiers was not the man to ruffle a real soldier, and Cromwell let him be.

That handsome head had escaped perils so many and so various that to fall in love with its owner was the only thing a young and romantic girl could do. And that the only daughter of the House of Fairfax should lay her unsophisticated heart at his feet was perhaps inevitable.

Mary Fairfax was at this time only eighteen years old. A simple, joyous girl, fond of finery and harmless amusement, her poor head was instantly turned by the attractions of " the most beautiful person any Court in Europe

[1] *Poems of the Second Duke of Buckingham.*

ever saw." When poor Mary looked in her mirror she saw there a pair of bright eyes illuminating a face more honest than handsome, and a short figure with no charm beyond the ordinary grace of health and girlhood. But her heart was gay and innocent, and if an innocent frolic could be designed by a disreputable beau, then the Duke could count on her sharing in it with spirit and delight.

Mary's short life had had its share of romance and adventure; so that in some things she was a match for this hero of Arras and Valenciennes.

The girl, as a mere child, had been inured to the hardships of a camp. For a time she had followed the fortunes of the Cavalier army. The little maid, and the servant who attended her, mounted on horseback, accompanied Fairfax along the line of march. It was a strange life for the daughter of an English nobleman, even in the seventeenth century, more especially for a delicate child. According to her father she fainted frequently, and during one desperate ride the general had to desert her, leaving her with no other guard than her maid at a house by the wayside, in little hope of ever seeing her again. It was the heroine of this stirring adventure whose hand was destined to rebuild the ruined house of Buckingham.

Three months after the Duke's arrival in England, the 7th of September 1657, he led Mary Fairfax to the altar, and the clergyman, in the enthusiasm of the hour, "saw God in the Duke's face." But he alone saw the vision.[1]

Thus far the authorities had winked at Buckingham's presence, but now, singularly enough, he was committed to the Tower. Fairfax demanded his release, and this being refused led to a rupture between the general and his former friends. Buckingham was allowed to remove to Windsor on Cromwell's death, and later was released on twenty thousand pounds' security given by Lord Fairfax.

[1] *The Life of the Second Duke of Buckingham*, by Winifred. Lady Burghclere.

He then went to live with his father-in-law, and enamoured of the novelty of a quiet and orderly existence settled down into a model country gentleman.

Unluckily for Mary Fairfax the Restoration put an end to that placid life in the shires, and Buckingham was established at Whitehall, a premier amongst the profligates of the Court. The King was keenly susceptible to ridicule. To do wrong was nothing. To be found out was nothing. But to be ridiculous was killing. The Spirit of Mockery guided and ruled everything. It was greater than vice. It could save even virtue from contempt if it were so minded, but one does not read that it was ever so minded; certainly it was never Buckingham's whim, and he was the master of all its arts, the high-priest of all its subtleties. No wit was readier than his, no tongue more audacious. Withal there was the spirit of ready laughter, of boyish recklessness in all he said and did, that lent to his manners a charm and a glamour that could never go with a less joyous temperament or more sober deportment, however richly gifted these might be. He laughed where he would, made love where he would, mocked at the King as glibly as at any of his comrade-coxcombs, the only law he regarded being the weather-cock of his own vagrant fancy.

Where the art of ridicule was the art of statecraft, and ready wit, if not the passport to fortune, was certainly the surest safeguard against misfortune, George Villiers was necessarily first amongst the great.

Did any man stand in his way in either business or pleasure, then would Villiers remove him as lightly as he would brush aside a fly. Hyde was his chief aversion, and he used the talents that had delighted the rabble at Charing Cross to make the Chancellor the laughing-stock of King and Court. And at last Hyde went. He was ready to spit the Earl of Bristol for something he left unsaid in the House of Lords. He wanted to slay the Chamberlain to the Princess of Orange because of a quarrel

in Her Highness's drawing-room. At one time he was in love with this Princess, at another with the King's youngest sister. Wherever his fancy turned, there he paid his court, regardless of the consequences for the lady or for himself.

Fortune does not always favour the madcap, and there were times when the King grew tired of this erratic and unscrupulous genius, who so often made him laugh, that he was not afraid even to laugh at him. Once, while out of favour at Court, an incident occurred which is vouched for by St Evremond. It was a droll story from the point of view of the Court gallants, with the death of a man's body and of a woman's soul and the ashes of a humble home making up its drollery.

With a boon companion Buckingham took an inn in the country and laid himself out to obtain the patronage of yokels, whose womenfolk were comely enough to attract his admiration. Never before had the countryside seen such an inn, never before such a landlord. In this gay hostelry money was nothing; and the father of a handsome lass or the husband of a comely bride need never show the colour of a shilling, though he ate and drank of the best that table and cellar could provide.

A dour Puritan belonging to the hamlet had a charming young wife. She was marked down for destruction by the Duke's companion, who was no other than Wilmot, Earl of Rochester.

While her husband was enjoying the hospitality of the inn, Wilmot, disguised as a peasant girl, wandered out to pursue his designs on the heart of the luckless countrywoman. Close by her door the masquerader fainted, and was carried indoors to receive attention at the hands of the guileless tenants. The " peasant girl " recovered quickly from her indisposition, but was in no hurry to take once more to the road. She produced a flask of cordial. The young wife did not care for strong drinks, but her sister-in-law did, and while this lady solaced herself with the

bottle the stranger was suddenly transformed into a reckless lover, who assailed with all the arts of a dazzling Court rake the heart of his guileless hostess.

The courtier won the young wife's heart and carried her off from her good-man, who at the same time was robbed of his savings by his runaway bride. The Court was convulsed with laughter when the tale was told, and the errant nobles returned in glory to Whitehall.

The husband of Phyllis, he who was but a common Englishman, with nothing else to live for save home and wife and the modest fruits of his own thrift, was stone-blind to the humour of this prime jest. Finding he had lost all he went out and hanged himself. Of the country-woman's end there is no record. Record would be superfluous. The literature of the day tells her story a thousand times over, the story of the descent of a foolish woman from the simple happiness of her cottage to the horrors of a life of profligacy amidst the shameless abandonment of Restoration London.

When Hyde fell, following the marriage of Frances Stuart, Ormond remained to plague the overbearing Villiers. The gallant old Butler seems to have regarded the younger Duke, and indeed his Royal master, with a certain pitying contempt. His courage and loyalty were above question. His sword and purse had proved his quality a thousand times.

It was Buckingham's misfortune, or so he doubtless regarded it, to be allied by marriage to this proud old nobleman. His niece, the daughter of his sister Mary, she who had figured in the farce of Charing Cross, was the wife of Lord Arran, and was the Duke's heiress, since Heaven had not blessed his union with Mary Fairfax with children. The prospects of the Ormond family would, under such circumstances, be a sufficient reason for the Duke's hatred.

There was another. Ormond's heir, Lord Ossory, was as proud and mettlesome as his father was lofty and self-

restrained. In the House of Lords Buckingham spoke on a Bill opposed by Ormond, and expressed the opinion that whoever was against it should have either an "Irish interest or an Irish understanding." Ossory challenged Buckingham, but no duel took place owing to the unusual zeal of the authorities. The bad blood engendered between the contending parties found expression, however, a few days later in the House of Lords, when Buckingham rested his elbow on the arm of the Marquis of Dorchester.

The Marquis was as hot as his neighbour.

"Do not crowd me so much," said Dorchester. . . . "I am as good a man as you."

Buckingham blazed up angrily.

Off came the Marquis's periwig in the Duke's hand. The Marquis had boasted he was as good a man as his enemy, and now was the time to prove it before his peers, and so he charged wildly at His Grace. A wig for a wig was his inspiration to action. But the noble Marquis had not the advantage of inches, and so when they were separated by their edified colleagues he could only boast of having plucked a modest handful of hair from the handsomest head in Europe.

Amongst the ladies of the Court there was one, and only one perhaps, who could be called a twin soul to this brilliant rake who, without fear or love or loyalty, was in very truth a sprite of mischief incarnate. This lady was Anne Maria Brudenel, Countess of Shrewsbury. Anne Maria was a fascinating creature with languishing eyes and drooping lids, when as a young bride she appeared at the Restoration Court with Francis Talbot, her Earl. Wise men would avoid the spells cast by these languorous eyes. But at Whitehall the wise man was he who courted the worst that a woman's magic could accomplish. And soon her reputation was scarcely less notorious than that of Barbara Palmer.

The Earl of Arran was one of her first admirers, amongst whom Henry Jermyn, the most irresistible of

coxcombs, soon enlisted. To be pursued by Harry Jermyn was a distinction which promoted a belle to the first rank of beauties.[1] Her attractions could no longer be disputed once Jermyn had deigned to pay them homage, for then she had passed the master. He was the fashion, as much as patches or powder, and he was encouraged from motives of vanity by those whose hearts he could never touch. Jermyn's successes with the ladies excited the surprise, and perhaps the jealousy, of some of his contemporaries, who utterly failed to discover any power of attraction in a fellow with a very insignificant figure upon which was set a very large head with very few ideas in it either to render him agreeable or conceal his ridiculous airs.

Audacity born of perfect confidence in himself and a sublime conceit of his gifts accounted doubtless for Jermyn's reputation as a beau. Lady Shrewsbury was, however, above the fashion. If Jermyn's arts did not fail they were certainly slow to captivate the beautiful creature. If he did not pursue her altogether in vain he was certainly far from being invincible.

This coxcomb, with a transcendent reputation to maintain, was crossed in his pleasure by Captain Thomas Howard of the Guards, brother of the Earl of Carlisle.

Howard was a quiet and unassuming fellow, though brave and spirited when roused. He invited Anne Maria to be his guest at Spring Gardens, which as already described was a favourite rendezvous of society pleasure-seekers.

The gardens contained lovely walks and arbours and thickets, "contrived to all advantages of gallantry." And when refreshment was desired the lovers could stray to a certain "cabaret in the middle of this paradise, where could be obtained all the delicacies of the day, for which the gallants had to pay sauce." Howard was therefore

[1] Grammont's *Memoirs*.

to "pay sauce" on this occasion, and his reward was to be the exclusive enjoyment of the society of Francis Talbot's lovely lady.

But he reckoned without Harry Jermyn.

Jermyn, by accident or design, was in the gardens when he caught sight of Lady Shrewsbury on the balcony with Howard. Some devilry inspired him to thwart the gallant Guardsman who was so much more fortunate than himself. When the Countess saluted him he immediately left the garden and attached himself to her, notwithstanding that Howard did not like him.

Meanwhile a piper belonging to Howard's regiment, who had been retained for the amusement of the captain's guest, now played his liveliest airs, only to his employer's discomfiture. For Jermyn sharpened his wit by making merry at the expense of the music, while the lady encouraged him with "soft looks." Three times Howard was on the point of running his tormentor through, but he deferred the luxury until it could be enjoyed with all appropriate ceremony.

Jermyn returned to bed proud and happy. He was the hero of an episode which would add cubits to his height. But in the morning there was a message reminding him that before he could enjoy his triumph he should procure a new lease of his life. The empire he had won so lightly had to be retained by the sword. Howard had need of him.

He took for his second Colonel Giles Rawlings, one of the Duke of York's household. Colonel Cary Dillon, son of the Earl of Roscommon, went out with Howard. Rawlings was carried dead from the field, while Jermyn was removed to his lodgings, wounded in three places, and with only a spark of life left in his highly-prized heart.

Francis, Earl of Shrewsbury, never seems to have dreamt of taking any part in these entertainments, either at the board or in the field, which his wife's beauty inspired. It was therefore with a light heart, so far as the

Earl was concerned, that Killigrew entered the lists of love.

He was at this time a man of about thirty. His character has already been revealed in the affair of Anne Hyde. There was worse to follow. In March 1667-68 he is said to have disgraced himself by a crime which involved the drugging of a mother and daughter. For this he was banished, but was soon back in England again—where there was now law for the rich and none for the poor; and mothers and daughters and common men who desired only to live and let live were beginning to sigh for the dull days when Justice was somewhat blindfold, and her sword was Oliver's.

Nobody, as Grammont remarks drily, thought of interrupting Killigrew's amour with Lady Shrewsbury. The Earl was famous as the most accommodating of husbands, and there was for the moment no rival to repeat the comedy of Spring Gardens and the tragedy of Giles Rawlings.

Killigrew "possessed a great deal of wit, and still more eloquence, which most particularly displayed itself when he was elevated with the juice of the grape. He then indulged himself in giving luxurious descriptions of Lady Shrewsbury's charms and beauties, with which above half the Court were as well acquainted as himself. . . . As this indiscreet lover was a frequent visitor at the Duke of Buckingham's table, he was constantly employing his rhetoric on this subject, and he had full opportunity for his harangues; for they generally sat down to dinner at four o'clock and only rose just in time for play in the evening." [1]

All this boasting of what he regarded as his great good fortune lost it to him in the end. The Duke of Buckingham was at first amused, then interested. Where Arran, Howard and Jermyn had paid their devoirs, where Killigrew the arch-cynic was a slave, there some charm might

[1] Grammont's *Memoirs*.

perchance be found to entertain one more fastidious, more critical, more appreciative. Killigrew had painted the portrait in colours so enchanting that Buckingham was resolved to possess the original, and Anne Maria, dazzled by her new admirer, was swiftly blinded to the existence of Harry Killigrew.

The fruit had turned to ashes on Harry's lips, and all the luscious exuberance with which he was wont to sing the Countess's praises gave way to bitter invective. Her charms became defects, and to realize how luridly these defects could be painted it must be borne in mind that the gentleman had the advantage of being a notorious liar. He was warned that his tongue might land him in an unpleasant predicament, but for that glib tongue there was no governance.

Going to his house at Turnham Green one night in May 1669, the jilted gallant's hackney coach had not reached Hammersmith when he was waylaid by Lady Shrewsbury's men. Killigrew's hand sought his sword, but not promptly enough. In the quiet eventide, while the Thames meandered to the sea by the fields that now are built over with myriad streets, the would-be assassins rained blows upon one of the wittiest and gayest rogues of a generation rich in wits and roguery.

"Kill the villain!" cried a shrill voice not far away.

If sounds could reach the ears of the fainting gallant that murderous order might well have shocked him to new life, for it was the voice of the fair Anne Maria herself. The beauty of the languishing eyes was watching her men at work, that her commission might be well done.

It was the talk of the town that Lady Shrewsbury had planned this crime. But justice was not only blind and deaf and dumb. Justice was stone dead.

Killigrew recovered, but his escape did not teach him prudence. In July he was at the Duke's play-house, and in the neighbouring box was the Duke of Buckingham.

ANNA MARIA BRUDENEL, COUNTESS OF SHREWSBURY

FROM THE PAINTING BY SIR PETER LELY IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

The insuppressible Killigrew amused himself by witticisms at Buckingham's expense. Nor did he spare "scurvy language," which, no doubt, the audience enjoyed better than the farce offered by the actors. Warmed by this exchange, Killigrew, in valorous mood, left his box and attacked His Grace, whom he hit on the head with his sword in the scabbard. Then his courage failed him and away he ran, pursued by Buckingham, over the forms. At last down he fell, and as a happy ending to this diverting performance the Duke administered to his tormentor a kicking.

Earl Francis, about this time, discovered himself in the astonishing part of jealous husband. He had suffered all he could suffer for this Anne Maria Brudenel. Now he would kill or be killed, and he sent a challenge to Buckingham.

The Earl's seconds were Mr Bernard Howard, brother of the Duke of Norfolk, and Sir John Talbot. Buckingham's seconds were a Mr Jenkins and Sir Robert Holmes.

The battle took place at Barn Elms, while the lady who had watched Killigrew fight for his life, and very nearly lose it, now stood by, they say, attired as a page, holding the Duke of Buckingham's horse, while His Grace crossed swords with the Earl, her husband.

If Anne Maria, indeed, held her lover's bridle within sight of the sward where the rapiers clashed, as Francis Talbot made a belated stand for his honour, then she saw her wretched husband receive his death wound. He was run clean through the body and was carried from the field to die. The end came for the unfortunate husband at Arundel House on the 16th of March.[1] It was the third life at least that had been sacrificed because of her witcheries. For Buckingham's second, Jenkins, was already dead, and the grass had hardly yet grown green on the grave where lay the bold Rawlings.

[1] Pepys s *Diary*.

For slaying his mistress's husband Buckingham was given a free pardon by the King. License could no farther go. It is true that town and country rang with denunciations of one who had sinned so deeply and impudently, for honesty and truth were not altogether fled the land. But Buckingham was heedless of the storm. Shrewsbury was dead. He lived and possessed his wife. That was everything.

When the Earl was two months in his grave the Duke of Buckingham arrived at his home one day with the lady who was to be its new mistress. Poor Mary Fairfax! Fate had given her the handsomest of gallants, the wittiest of courtiers for a husband. But Fate had given her a splendid idol with a heart of stone. She had nursed Lady Shrewsbury when ill; had received her as a guest. Now her guest had returned. . . .

To her lord, Mary said:

" . . . This other and I cannot live beneath the same roof. . . ."

" Why, madam," said the Duke, " I did think so, and therefore have ordered your coach to be ready to carry you to your father's."

And the man who spoke thus was Prime Minister of England.

CHAPTER XVIII

FAMOUS DOINGS AT DOVER CASTLE

"Quelle bergère! quels yeux
A faire mourir les dieux.
Aussi comme eux on l'adore
Elle est de leur propre sang,
Mais sa personne est encore
Bien au-dessus de son rang,
Des jeunes lis et des roses,
Toutes nouvellement ecloses,
Forment son teint delicate.

. . . . . .

Il est vrai tout le monde l'aime;
Mais après son devoir, ses moutons et son tien,
Je pense qu'elle n'aime rien."—BENSERADE.

THE shepherdess conceived by Benserade as made by the gods from lilies and roses, upon whom the gods then looked and, delirious with the loveliness of their own handiwork, were ready to die for love of her, was Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans! Born amidst storms, this girl's spirit was the spirit of sunshine, of flowers, and of laughter. To her the world was a theatre in which romance should be played all the time, with a Queen of Beauty as the heroine and knights of ancient faith her adorers. But the theatre was, in the long run, a house of tragedy, and the victim was Benserade's lady of lilies and roses, who thought that silks and satins and filmy laces and the petals of newly-opened flowers were the roughest things in life.

Before the end came her eyes were opened a little. She saw other things besides brilliants and feathers and ornaments of gold and exquisite pictures, and the ravish-

ing light and shade of forests, and gardens planned by craftsmen with fairy art, and fountains that flung jewels in millions against the blue of the sky. But this enchanting Eve had eaten of the fruit and should die, eaten in innocent and girlish levity.

Born at Exeter in 1664 this Princess was in her twenty-fourth year when, in 1668, news reached Paris that Shrewsbury had been slain by Buckingham, and that the affairs of England were in the hands of the blood-stained victor.

Mistresses made trouble enough at the French Court, which was the model for the vices of Whitehall, but the disciple had left the master far behind, and the veil with which scandal was clothed by Louis would not be tolerated by the Buckinghams, and Rochesters, and Killigrews.

Adversity began for Henrietta in her cradle. The infant's governess was Anne Villiers, Lady Dalkeith, cousin of the Duke of Buckingham. Rather than surrender the baby to the Parliament the governess fled with her charge from Oatlands, resolved to cross the seas to restore the little princess to her mother. Her ladyship took the road disguised as a serving-woman, and since coarse raiment could not conceal the symmetry of the Court belle, she strapped on her shoulders a bundle of linen, to look like a hunch; and with this seeming hunchback little Henrietta, garbed as a little village wench, set out on her travels.

A French valet played the part of father to the baby-princess during this dangerous journey. And close on the heels of the poor travellers was Sir John Berkeley, ready to deal with spies on the lookout for quarry, or vagabonds, or gentlemen too curious as to the hunchback whose air was not altogether the one that commonly went with wolsey.

The little girl was only two years old and just beginning to prattle, and one of her baby-words was " prin-

cess." But when little Henrietta said "princess" those unversed in nursery speech thought she said "Peter," and so the baby was styled "Peter" by her hunchback-mother and the valet promoted for the time being to the dignity of fatherhood.

The two-year-old refugee was too proud to be pleased with her new condition, and would have all she met on the road know her true quality. The ludicrous scene was therefore presented of little Peter trying to tell the passers-by that she was no beggar, that her clothing was not really her own, that at home she wore silks and laces; in fine, that she was a Princess of England.

Carrying the child on her back Lady Dalkeith reached Dover, whence a French packet conveyed them to Calais and safety—and to the anxious Queen, robbed by adverse fortune of husband, home and children.

In those days, as we have seen, the margin between childhood and wifehood was narrow, and the match-makers were soon busy selecting from amongst eligible princes a husband for the little exile. It was perhaps natural that Queen Henrietta should think of the young King of France as the very partner for her idolized daughter. Nor would the match have been quite unpleasing to Anne of Austria, though her fondest hopes were that a Spanish kinswoman should share her son's throne. The desolate position of the little girl appealed deeply to Anne, who, receiving the child into her arms as a babe, to whom clung the glamour of Lady Dalkeith's noble adventure, loved her from the first with maternal tenderness. But to Louis his cousin was only a beautiful child, though the great man himself was not by many years older than she.

Cardinal Mazarin had, at this time, introduced his nieces to the Court of France. The power enjoyed by His Eminence ensured for the Mancini girls the homage of the gentlemen of the Court, but their relationship to the Cardinal was no recommendation to the favour of the

young King. Love, however, is greater than political feuds, and one of the Mancinis went very near to becoming Queen of France, so deep was the impression she made upon the heart of its impressionable liege-lord.

Anne of Austria gave a juvenile ball, to which was bidden a small party of favoured ladies and their younger daughters.[1] Henrietta was at the time eleven and Louis just sixteen. She was the greatest personage amongst the young people present, and the one with whom Louis was expected to dance the first quadrille. The boy-King, however, chose to be above etiquette. Marie Mancini, his divinity for the time being, was not present, but her sister, the Duchess de Mercœur, was, and in defiance of his mother he led her out. But Anne of Austria was still the parent rather than the subject of His Majesty. So Her Majesty left her chair of State and, descending upon the dancers, took the Duchess from the King and commanded him to dance with his young cousin of England. The poor English Queen was sorely embarrassed at this turn of affairs. The boy now at war with his mother in a ball-room was for the moment in tutelage, but would not be so for long. When he should hold the reins of power her destiny would be in his hands, and that of her children, above all, the destiny of the wandering Prince of Wales. At least so thought this sorely-tried lady, who regarded her native France as the mistress of the nations. Thus though it was hard to see her daughter slighted for a Mancini, it was harder still that the slight should be made the ground of an open quarrel, which would alienate the King and make her misfortunes the laughing-stock of all Paris.

Queen Henrietta explained to the belligerents that her little Henrietta would not dance. It was difficult to say why not, but she would not. But the Court had gone mad for the moment. Manners and etiquette and tact had flown out of the window. The little Princess should

[1] Strickland's *Life of Queen Henrietta Maria.*

dance, declared Anne of Austria. The Princess's mother vowed she was too young. But youth did not avail with Anne. She should dance though she were in her cradle. In desperation the English Queen changed her ground. Her little girl was not too young. That was a slip of the tongue. She meant she . . . she . . . had hurt her foot! She could not, she dare not dance. Her foot pained her too much.[1]

After that there was no more to be said, since the little girl had not been brought there to torture her. But at intervals throughout that brilliant evening his mother scolded King Louis, who retired in high dudgeon, less disposed to fall in love with his little cousin than to chop off the heads of all the ladies of the Blood Royal, especially those with claims upon the quadrille.

When, years later, England had grown weary of Puritanism, and the little pensioner of France was suddenly raised to the dignity of a Princess of the ruling house of England, if there were those at the French Court who, in the days of adversity, would scorn her, time had brought its revenge. The Royal maid who had been slighted for a Mancini had now a dowry worthy of any prince in Europe. Louis was no longer to be won. Marie Thérèse was his Queen. But the King's brother, Philip of Orleans, the prettiest young coxcomb in France, gladly possessed himself of the prize.

This unfortunate girl, destined to a life so brief, so widely beloved, withal so unhappy, is depicted for us at this period by the gentle pen of Father Gamache. "La petite Princess," as the priest calls her, was at this time only sixteen. "She was," he writes, "of a rare beauty, of a sweet temper, and of a noble spirit, and applied herself to all the exercises fitting to her Royal degree. She excelled the most skilful in dances, in music, and in all similar accomplishments." The same paternal admirer speaks of the "elegance of her person, her port sweetly

[1] Strickland's *Life of Queen Henrietta Maria.*

majestic, and all her movements so justly and tastefully regulated " as to call forth the praise of all beholders.

The girl seems to have been always younger than her years, at a Court where the only safe place for a beautiful child was the seclusion of the nursery. For Henrietta the sun should have stopped in its course. She should have ever been fourteen, fifteen, sixteen. . . . After that they should have sent her to a convent, or have put an older or a less beautiful head on her exquisite shoulders.

Philip was handsome, with fine dark eyes, and silky curling hair that fell in thick tresses around his shoulders. His face was long and delicately curved, the chin finely chiselled, the mouth small. The lips and nose were, however, coarse, and in them the less refined elements of his character found expression. Monsieur would perhaps have been a great man had he been bred up to be one. But fearful lest the State should again suffer from dissensions such as had been wrought by his uncle, Gaston of Orleans, the boy was trained to no worthier vocation than to be an ornament of the Court, a graceful master of the art of dandyism.

Monsieur's costumiers were the statesmen he looked up to. His perfumer had done better than win a battle when he distilled some new and delicious essence, or compounded some pomade or cosmetic that enhanced the pleasures of Monsieur's toilet. He rouged his cheeks, he powdered his hair, his doublet glistened with jewels. If he liked a ribbon, Philip found a way to flutter it, as though he were a maid-of-honour who should captivate or die of chagrin.

On the 2nd of January 1661 the Queen and Henrietta, having brought to a close a brief visit to England following the Restoration, left London for France. They were escorted to the coast by Charles the Second and Buckingham, who had now fallen in love with the destined bride of Orleans and begged the King's permission to accom-

pany her to France. He had made no preparation for the journey, but Charles, nevertheless, yielded acquiescence. Buckingham seized the chance to woo the bride-elect. Heaven, however, did not smile on his suit. The Buckinghams were not destined to success in their designs on the daughters of France, and the second Duke failed as his father had done.

Instead of a courtship at sea there was a terrible storm. The vessel was nearly lost, and after perilous adventures they were glad to put back to harbour. Henrietta was always a delicate girl, and what she had suffered had reduced her to a condition of profound collapse. Her life even was in danger for a time, and it was almost the end of January before she reached France.

Henrietta was intoxicated with her new-found liberty as the bride of Monsieur. Philip had been trained to regard the King's word as law, and as law up to a point he regarded it, and the wreck of his bride's life was in some degree the price paid for that foolish deference.

Philip of Orleans might do what perfect Adonis might do to win a girl's heart. But Adonis should be more than beautiful to hold what he had won where his treasure made him the envy of all men. Philip was perhaps irresistible. But only until he was found out, and this should be soon, for his vanity was open and admiration of himself was the elixir of his existence. Monsieur could love no woman half so well as he loved the darling of all his dreams by day and by night, the darling whose face he adored in his own mirror, whose flowing hair he powdered, and whose smooth, dark cheeks he touched with rouge—a born artist when the picture to be made entrancing was his Royal and comely self.

To see Monsieur was to admire him as an ornament of the palace. To know him was to despise him. But Henrietta, endowed with every pleasing quality, and many good ones, lacking only wisdom to make her perfect, was loved and coveted the more she was known.

She came to Fontainebleau, dazzled the King, and extinguished the young Queen. This bride, created according to the poet's fancy of lilies and roses, was a Queen of hearts, with the title to universal dominion in her eyes. There was once upon a time when Louis would not dance with her. Now there was nobody like Madame. She smiled upon him and he made her mistress of the realms of imagination in which poets and musicians and painters were the King's lieutenants, whose duty it was to play the part of enchanters, transforming Fontainebleau into a Paradise of Art.

The master of Fontainebleau was more than a sybarite. He was a man of genius. He lived for glory as well as for pleasure. Great deeds had their poetry for him, and great men thronged around a throne where they were welcomed as the highest princes, the truest aristocrats. The flower of French intellect imparted dignity and beauty to a mode of life that without it would have degenerated into sensual wantonness, a repetition of every Court in every age when illimitable Wealth and unbridled Luxury are bride and groom.

In France no woman can ever perhaps be a real Queen save a Frenchwoman, or one French by affinity. Henrietta was French to her finger-tips, and whatever of the blood of England was manifest in her character was such as only heightened the charm of qualities essentially French.

Marie Thérèse had not the genius, the coquetry, the devilry necessary for the part of mistress of an establishment where it was the business of the fairest daughters of France to amuse the King. On the other hand the vivacity, the airy spirit, which impart charm and zest to hunting and dancing and all the pleasures of luxurious youth, were Henrietta's in the highest degree. In the pursuit of enjoyment she was tireless, as a lady would need to be who would keep pace with Louis XIV.

The King, who could not endure her for a quadrille,

now rode with her in the woods of Fontainebleau, followed by a gallant train of courtiers and ladies, and if they lost their escorts it was an accident that might befall any gay and careless couple, for the woods were deep and pierced with a thousand bewildering paths. When evening fell they drove out in carriages, or they walked into the woods, and these walks lasted sometimes far into the night.[1] A garden-theatre was constructed, to which a beautiful avenue led, and on the sward, which served as a stage, ballets were enacted, of which the King and the Duchess were the leaders. For a time Monsieur and Madame tore themselves away from these seductive scenes to visit the English Queen-Dowager, but Fontainebleau was irresistible, and they soon returned to its gaieties. Amongst its beauties were some with angel faces and black hearts. To these a smile from the King was the seventh heaven, and where he smiled they paid their court, so courting Madame they could have killed her with jealousy.

Poor Marie Thérèse! In her case jealousy would have been natural. But she was only miserable, too miserable even to be jealous. She too was young. She could dance and play to the life the Queen on the sylvan stage, if only her lord had helped her. But her part was not so written. It was for her to sit on the throne and submit to eclipse by Madame who, with her ten thousand coquetries of eye and eyelid and silken lashes, of sensitive, mobile lips and pearly teeth, might ravish the gods. Madame was a White-witch and she bewitched them all.

Anne of Austria's heart was heavy for her young kinswoman, learning so bitterly how to be a Queen in France. She spoke to Henrietta the wise things taught her under the ferule of experience. And yet this sparkling girl was not unlike the foolish young wife who long ago had strayed by the Loire at Amiens, under the stars of June, with the music of a splendid cavalier's voice tempt-

[1] Julia Cartwright's *Life of the Duchess of Orleans.*

ing her to the distant shades where lovers might be happy. And to the shades she had gone. And then there was a girl's cry from the darkness and George Villiers was standing on guard, waiting at gaze, waiting for any gentleman of France who dared to draw and fight for his Queen!

But Henrietta only laughed at the warnings of the Queen-mother, as the Henriettas always do. But this princess was too good-natured, too amiable, to be happy while she was the cause of discord. At her age deep thought was not perhaps to be expected. But when she had reflected upon what those who loved her thought of her and the King, Henrietta vacated the place she had usurped to make way for the rightful Queen. The King helped her to do what was right, for his mother had shown him that if he loved Henrietta worthily it was unfair to make her conduct food for gossip, unfair to her, unfair to his brother. . . .

It was hard to be first the spoiled child of the Court, then in obedience to cold propriety to be only Monsieur's wife, a great lady relegated as it were to a chilly pedestal.

It was then that the beau-ideal chevalier, if the beau ideal may be found at courts, pressed through the throng to pay homage to Madame. This peerless gallant of a famous race was something of a dreamer, something of a knight of romance, and looked his part, for he was a handsome, soldierly fellow, with a heart for any enterprise, whether of love or war. This chevalier, who was happy to touch the hem of the Princess's robe, was Armand, Count de Guiche.

Armand was the son of Marshal de Gramont. He was a favourite of Monsieur's, and his sister, Madame de Monaco, was very dear to Henrietta. For a man of his type, proud, chivalrous, handsome, brave, enamoured of beauty and spoiled by beauties, it was inevitable that he should fall in love with the goddess of them all. Nor could Madame be blind to the attractions of such a

splendid cavalier, the heir of a great name, who had already added to its lustre on the battle-field; a soldier who might dally with maids-of-honour, and ruffle it with coxcombs, but would ever be more than a mere saunterer. The Count danced with Madame, and rehearsed with her the ballets that transformed to poetry the prose of life. Did she want some service, great or trivial, then Count Armand was there waiting for the sign to die if she would have it so.

Monsieur Armand was too ardent to conceal his passion. He lived indeed in a circle where concealment was impossible in affairs of the heart. Anything else but that; for here the infinite subtleties of the language of the eye, of the eyebrow, were studied with feverish zest, feverish delight. Did Armand touch his lady's fingers in the dance a hundred pairs of eyes that could read the secrets of a lover's breast, though it were cased in armour, knew every word that Armand's heart was sending to his idol's through the warm blood of hand clasped in hand. When the ballet permitted him to rhapsodize about her charms, the Count's acting was too perfect, because the poetry he declaimed was the simple truth. His heart, speaking through his eyes, warned Madame of her danger, and warned Madame's husband that his favourite gentleman was his rival for his wife's love.

The Duke of Orleans remonstrated witn the Count. They quarrelled, and the latter left the Court for a time. Anne of Austria was now seriously perturbed for the future of this volatile daughter-in-law. Everything was going to the devil. The King was crazed on La Vallière. Monsieur was crazed on himself. Who was to save the Princess from such knights of romance as this Armand?

A maid-of-honour named Montalais was Henrietta's evil genius. She wound herself into Count de Guiche's confidence, and promised to aid him in pressing his suit on her mistress. Choosing a favourable opportunity, this creature related to Madame, with artful phrases,

the distress to which his passion had reduced the Count, and encouraged by the manner in which her speech was received presented her lady with a letter from the gallant.

The Duchess refused the letter. But that was nothing. The maid opened it and read it for herself, so that there was satisfaction for the curiosity of mistress and maid, and no harm done.

Henrietta's health at this time obliged her to leave Fontainebleau for Paris. As she set out the maid-of-honour threw a bundle of *billets-doux* into the litter. The sick woman surely knew the handwriting. She had seen it that day when Montalais had tendered the letter which she had so wisely declined. This was wicked of Montalais. But it was tempting; and half the harm was done since the letters were there lying at her feet, and as for the other half, nobody would know whether she had read them or torn them into fragments and scattered them to the winds without bestowing on them a second glance. . . . It was a tedious journey, and Madame was ill and bored, and the letters were not torn in fragments and thrown to the winds!

While the Duchess lay ill at the Tuilleries, Montalais nearly effected her ruin post-haste. . . . Inaction was torment for Madame. The woods at Fontainebleau, the gardens, the flowers, the gay spirit of the hunting-morn called to her. But here she was a prisoner. Blessed was she who could contrive to distract her at such a time, and Montalais obtained that benison, for she suggested a fortune-teller, well versed in his calling, to tell the future, and perhaps a discreet scrap of the past to Madame and all of them. Henrietta was charmed. So Montalais introduced her fortune-teller, and he looked into Madame's eyes and told her so much that she might guess he knew more. Then her ladies had their turn, and they too may well have been surprised. All, that is to say, save Montalais; and her nonchalance was understood when, in a few

days, the whole palace knew that the fortune-teller who had proved so wise and so entertaining was Armand de Guiche.[1]

This knight of romance was playing his part far too sincerely. The King took alarm. He was sorry too for Madame, and promised her the noble wizard would not suffer if she broke off all intercourse with him. Poor Madame had been the innocent victim of Montalais, so she gladly promised; for this Armand was so reckless that he should be cooled or his passion would set up a conflagration that would destroy them all.

The Marquis de Vardes, a gentleman of the bedchamber to Louis, a polished and witty courtier, would have Armand out of the way. He frightened Marshal de Gramont by describing to him the danger his son courted. The old soldier obtained from the King a military appointment in Lorraine for the rash youth; and thus Vardes, freed from a rival against whom he could not hope for success by fair means, could himself court without anxiety the delightful danger personified by Henrietta.

But Armand would have his adventures. One evening, before the Count left for the field, he was introduced by Montalais into Madame's apartment, whither she retired when opportunity served. It was her most daring breach of the conventions. A game with fire indeed. . . . Suddenly the word was passed to her that Monsieur was approaching. Montalais had barely time to hide the Count in the chimney, whence he managed to escape without encountering the lady's husband. But Monsieur had in some way got to know of the indiscretion, and in the morning the maid-of-honour was dismissed from the palace.

De Guiche at the wars was almost as dangerous as de Guiche in Paris. Brave as a lion he was superb in the field. Once his life was saved as by a miracle, the right sort of miracle to the very letter, for though a ball struck

[1] *Life of Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans.*

him over the heart, Madame's portrait, reposing there, turned the deadly missile. Meanwhile de Vardes was much occupied. To him as to the husband this infernal Armand, who would not be killed, was as embarrassing in banishment as at the palace. But de Vardes directed missiles against his rival's heart, which Henrietta's portrait could not divert. He wrote to the soldier of the Princess's coquetries, and received in reply complaints of her levity, which he showed her.

In this way the wily courtier managed to estrange the pair, and when, after a time, de Guiche was permitted to return to Paris from the army, on condition that he kept aloof from the Duchess, the treachery of his friend had made it comparatively easy for him to acquiesce. But this treaty was blown to the winds when the lover heard one day a story that thrilled him. It was that Madame had nearly fainted when told of some of his valorous deeds in the field, above all, when they said he had fallen. For this eager lover it was enough. He forgot his bargain. He would see Madame again, he would converse with her, he would be her lover if she would permit him. Then with the very pink of audacity this audacious lover, though he suspected de Vardes, entrusted him with a letter to the Duchess. The courtier resolved by means of it to effect, at a blow, the writer's ruin and the ruin of the woman who had resisted him. He first of all showed the letter to the King, and later presented it to Madame. But she was not wholly a child. Her woman's heart longed, doubtless, to divine the secret of the note, but she knew the man who offered it to be a villain, and she declined. Just as he withdrew the King entered. The letter he expected to find her absorbed in was not in her hands. Explanations followed, and the King, who was no lover of rascals, seized on the first opportunity to banish the spy to the provinces.

Montalais and de Vardes were gone. But Fate was resolved to ruin this princess, and so it took up the part

in which they had failed. Amongst the crowd of ladies at a masque de Guiche chose one as his partner whom of all others he ought not to have chosen, for she was the Duchess of Orleans. When her fingers touched his there was that in her veins that ought to have thrilled him. The perfume in the lady's hair recalled tender memories of Fontainebleau, of the Tuilleries, of that night in the chimney. Divine night! Divine chimney! It was indeed Madame. Recognizing each other, instead of parting at once, he told the lady his history since the night when he had taken leave of her so unceremoniously, and she told him hers. Swiftly flew the minutes. Then Monsieur approached. Again it was "adieu!" But now they were happier. They understood each other once more. As Henrietta turned away she tripped and would have fallen down some steps had not her lover sprung forward just in time to save her. He clasped her in his arms under her husband's eye. It was perhaps the first embrace. It was certainly their last.

Once more Marshal de Gramont decided that the best way to serve his son was to banish him. But before he would leave Paris he would see his idol once again. Presenting himself before her, garbed as a lackey, the man who had covered himself with glory in the battle-field was so overcome that he fainted at his lady's feet. Thus she saw him for the last time, and when his eyes opened once more she had passed for ever from his world.

The Duchess of Orleans was now chosen to go to England to arrange the Treaty of Alliance with which her name will ever be associated. Louis kept his brother in the dark about her embassy. He distrusted Monsieur, who was now the tool of the Chevalier de Lorraine, a graceless, handsome rascal, whose vocation was that of the mischief-maker.

The Duke of Orleans opposed the mission, apparently through pique. There were violent quarrels in the Royal

family. Lorraine was sent to the Bastille. Madame was carried off to the country by her lord, in high disgrace. The glorious days of her early married life had indeed passed for ever. There were now left to her but the funereal trappings of splendour. Peace was dead for Madame.

But Louis was not to be baulked by a mere dandy. Orleans was compelled to bow to the iron hand and agree that his wife should go to Dover. He would allow her three days in her native land.

A ridiculous adventure attended Henrietta's leave-taking.[1] The whole Court accompanied her for a distance as the King and Queen were going in state to Flanders. Rain fell in torrents along the road, and when they reached the banks of the Sambre it was impassable. Landrecies and comfortable shelter lay beyond the swollen waters. But Landrecies was as far away as the clouds, and the distinguished travellers and their suite had either to be established in a barn or spend the night under the drenching downpour. A few chickens were obtained, and off these and a little soup they dined, fingers supplying the place of cutlery. When the time came to retire the Royal personages were huddled together in separate apartments, on straw mattresses. There they slept or lay awake listening to the storm lashing the thatched roof. In the morning, we are told, the ladies presented a pitiable spectacle, especially those who were accustomed to the use of rouge. A year or two before Madame would have enjoyed the adventure like a school-girl. But health and spirits had deserted her. The world had grown serious. A storm was a storm, rain was rain. The enchantress was disenchanted and weary.

To Madame indeed the journey was a daily torture. Monsieur was in a dark mood. He entertained himself as though he almost hated his wife. She was taken very ill. To cheer her he said he had consulted an astrologer,

[1] *Life of the Duchess of Orleans*, by Julia Cartwright.

who told him he would have many wives. . . . Upon his life he believed he would !

At Lille, Madame escaped from the Royal jester. Monsieur did not wish her to go. But two kingdoms waited upon the fruits of the sick lady's enterprise. It was too late to draw back. This miserable leave-taking marked practically the end of her married life. Her doom was sealed. Her romance had run its course. She would disobey her husband and then she would return home to die.

Meanwhile at Dover Castle all was ready for Madame's coming. It was typical of the period that the Royal traveller should be accompanied by a suite of two hundred and thirty-seven persons. Amongst the maids-of-honour was a young Breton girl, who was to leave her mark on the story of the times. This was Louise de Querouaille, the daughter of noble but impoverished parents, whose sweet girlish beauty was her only dower.

When the ship bearing his beloved " Minette " glided on to the horizon, Charles embarked with York in a row boat and set off to greet his visitor. It was a loving meeting, and the English King did what he could to enliven the old castle with *fêtes* and rejoicings, that the dreary coast town might not kill with ennui this exile from the gayest society in the world.

Catherine of Braganza was there with the Duchess of York. Buckingham and Arlington and an army of courtiers were also down from London. The ancient town of Dover had never seen so much splendour and gaiety in all its long story. But Madame had business to do; and in the midst of the excursions by day on sea and land, and the revelry of the evenings, it was done.

The chief provisions of the Treaty, in so much as they affected the social life of the country, were an undertaking by Charles to join France in a war upon the United Provinces, and the promise of Charles to make open pro-

fession of the ancient faith which he held in his heart, if indeed he held any faith at all.

When the time came for them to part Charles showered presents on his sister. She had done well for him. At least, so thought a King who only wanted smooth living, and that was guaranteed him under the secret Treaty with Louis and its promise of French gold. . . . From his sister Charles begged a jewel as a token of her affection. To the brilliant Querouaille Henrietta turned, and bade her fetch her jewel-casket. But the casket was not wanted, the jewel was there; and taking the hand of the maid-of-honour Charles declared it to be the prize which he desired. But Henrietta had taken the girl from her parents, and she dare not, and she would not, return to France without her. But if Louise wished to return to England, and his Queen were willing to give her an appointment, he might be gratified. And so in the end it came to pass.

On the 12th of June Henrietta took leave of England, and a month later, at St Cloud, the tragedy was consummated.

The frail and beautiful creature was of texture too fine for the dissipation, the intrigues, the excitements, the anxieties of her public life, while in private Monsieur's bitter tongue lashed her with cruel taunts. At last she could fight the battle no longer, and she lay down to await her deliverance. The King and Queen hastened to her. Louis would do what man could do to save her, all that the greatest of Kings could do. But that was little. The doctors were as ignorant in France as in England. And if Madame's constitution could not save her, then might God help her, for human arts were of no avail.

Poor Madame! She was afraid to die; and yet that bright spirit watched with a sort of graceful despair the helplessness of her physicians. The King urged certain remedies, but the doctors would not have them. A bright

flash of the wit, of the spirit, of the gay old days illuminated her death-bed.

"I suppose," she said, "I must die according to rule."[1]

It was a brave jest. But Louis could not jest with the girl he loved so well speeding forever from his sight. Tears streamed down his cheeks. And while the Queen wept he knelt and clasped her in a last brotherly farewell.

"Do not weep, sire," she whispered; "you will make me weep too."

And the daughter of Charles I. would not die in tears. Her eyes left the King and travelled round the chamber of death, into which a crowd of courtiers and great ladies had followed the Sovereign. For each there was a gentle word of affectionate adieu.

And then her mind turned to England, to Charles:

"My only regret in dying," she said, "is to be leaving him."

The last sacraments were administered to her, and then Bossuet arrived post-haste from Paris to walk with her to the mysterious portals, open to her alone, where the emancipated spirit goes out to find the source whence it came, the womb of rest, somewhere in the round of infinity. Before her eyes, fast growing dim, the great bishop held the image of her crucified Saviour. Into her ears he poured words of hope in the Blood of the Lamb. To the poor soul, half-freed from the bonds of earth, panting for relief, for freedom, for the end, his words were welcome as a beacon in wide and pitch-dark desolation.

"Go on," she murmured.

It was the 30th of June. The hour of three drew nigh. At that hour He had died. . . . Perhaps at that mystic hour He would let her go too, go hence.

The bishop was still at her bedside. She could no

[1] *Life of the Duchess of Orleans.*

longer see the Cross, but she could touch the sacred image with arms outstretched. . . . He Who had died at three. . . .

It was her hour too.

"Into Thy hands, O God! . . . Into Thy hands. . . ."

As Bossuet repeated the wondrous words the Princess died.

"The King," says the Duc de Saint Simon, "sent for Brissac, who was amongst his guards, and commanded him to take six men and bring him Morel Simon, Madame's maître d'hôtel. When Simon appeared in the Royal presence he ordered the others to retire. Then the following conversation took place:

"My friend, if you confess all and tell the truth, whatever you may have done I pardon you. But if you disguise anything you are a dead man. Has not Madame been poisoned?"

"Yes, sire."

"And who poisoned her?"

"The Chevalier de Lorraine sent the poison. . . ."

"And my brother—did he know of it?"

"No, sire, none of us . . . were fools enough to tell him. He keeps no secrets. He would have ruined us."

"Ah! . . . That is all I wanted to know."

Louis made no further inquiries. Henrietta was dead. Nothing could restore her to him. If murder there had been its punishment were perhaps, in His Majesty's opinion, best left to Heaven. But modern writers are disposed to think that Madame's death was natural, that there was nothing to punish—that the young Princess had run her appointed course, that lilies and roses had lived as long as lilies and roses will amidst the blighting winds of this rude world.

CHAPTER XIX

COLONEL BLOOD'S ESCAPADES

THE Lord Steward of the household of Charles II. and Hereditary Grand Butler of Ireland was in those days the Duke of Ormond. He had lost a splendid fortune in the service of his Royal Master, who rewarded him with a degree of favour and affection that made him one of the greatest figures at the Restoration Court.

Ormond's lofty spirit, his power and independence, obtained for him many friends. But he had two enemies, who counted for more than all the others. They were the Duke of Buckingham and Lady Castlemaine. To these has been imputed by some the origin of an adventure that nearly brought the Duke to Tyburn.

On the night of the 6th of December 1670 the Duke of Ormond attended the Prince of Orange, then a youth of eighteen, who was soon to be at war with England, at an entertainment given him by the City Corporation. The Duke lived in Clarendon House, St James's Street, close by the palace, and thither his equipage turned with an escort of half a dozen footmen to protect him from the cut-throats who found nights so dark very well adapted to their business or pleasure. The Duke, dozing in his carriage, turning over perhaps in his mind the events of the convivial evening, failed to notice, as they drew nearer to his home, that his escort had deserted him, and save for his coachman that he was alone.

One device or another, cleverly contrived, had diverted the attention of his lacqueys from their lord's equipage. Lagging behind, a trifle weary after their long spell of duty, and drowsy perhaps with refreshments partaken of in the city while waiting upon the Lord Mayor's guests, the fellows were perfectly at ease with themselves that all the dangers of the town had been left behind, and that the hospitable doors of Clarendon House would soon close behind their noble master.

Suddenly strange figures took shape in the shadows, almost at the gates of St James's Palace. And before the coachman could whip up the horses and escape by flight, desperadoes had them at their mercy. Curse the footmen, where were they? Where was the watch? Where was anybody who, with ready pistols, or dexterous sword, might render aid? But there was little time for questions or curses. The coach-door was flung open. Strong hands and rough ones were laid upon the Duke. Out he was hustled, and, vainly struggling and protesting, he was hoisted behind a horseman, to whom he was made fast, and who forthwith, clapping spurs to his steed, was away in a twinkling into the night.

The horse with the two riders swiftly left the palace behind and galloped away down Piccadilly, the gallant old nobleman struggling desperately to free himself from his bonds and end the mad race. The fellow in front was, however, of great strength, and the Hereditary Grand Butler of Ireland strained in vain for freedom.

Meanwhile, there was another horseman who galloped still more swiftly, for his steed was less heavily weighted, and the rider, bent on pushing ahead with all speed, had no companion tugging at his elbow, seeking to dismount him at every stride.

This was the leader of the gang, the famous Colonel

COLONEL BLOOD

FROM THE PAINTING BY GERARD SOEST IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Blood himself, a man of mystery in his day, a man of mystery still.[1]

Colonel Blood dashed ahead to Tyburn, and found there the gallows ready for its work, all but the rope, and with this necessary adjunct, if his night's work was to be done, he had provided himself. Quickly the rope was fixed in its place, and there it swung to and fro, a grim omen in the darkness and silence of the winter's night, awaiting the gallant seigneur who was to be launched into his last sleep at its loose end. . . . The minutes passed. Blood listened for the sound of horse's hoofs, that would grow more distinct every moment, and finally bring in sight two cavaliers mounted on a single charger. But he strained his ears in vain. The gallows creaked; the rope swung, a weird pendulum registering the last moments of Ormond's life, but the doubly-ridden steed did not come.

We must hasten back to Piccadilly to the point, perhaps, where Park Lane merges to-day into that thoroughfare. Ormond had never ceased to struggle for freedom, and on reaching this point of what was then a wholly desolate road, save for a few scattered mansions of the aristocracy, fortune favoured him. He managed to thrust his foot beneath that of the ruffian, to whom he was bound. The fellow was now at a disadvantage. He had his back to his prisoner. He had, moreover, to manage his horse; and, at the same time, Ormond had obtained excellent leverage for throwing him from the saddle, assisted as he was by the motion of the animal. At last the moment for putting all his strength into that leverage came. Ormond poised his foot and jerked with all his might. The rogue's horse helped him, and out of the saddle toppled his master and the Duke with him, for the two should ride or fall together; but it was better to risk a broken neck to win safety than tamely gallop to certain destruction.

[1] *The Romance of London*, by John Timbs.

Rolling in the mire, Duke and villain continued their fight, and badly would the noble have fared had not his people, alarmed by the coachman, arrived on the scene and rescued His Grace.

The ringleader in this escapade, Colonel Blood, was the son of an Irish blacksmith, who had served with the Parliamentary forces.[1] Certain of his accomplices had suffered at the hands of Ormond, as the result of a design to surprise Dublin Castle, and Blood himself had been deprived of his property. It was the bold Colonel's fancy to hang the Duke, just as His Grace had hanged his friends, and he would have succeeded in his purpose but for the captive's good fortune in unhorsing his escort.

The King issued a proclamation for the arrest of the miscreants. But Blood had either surprising good fortune in eluding the law, or powerful patrons. The latter explanation was employed to the disadvantage of Buckingham. Ormond's eldest son, Lord Ossory, seems to have convicted Buckingham on suspicion of being the prime mover of the outrage, and to have declared before the King, that if his father came to his end by violence he would pistol Buckingham, even though he stood behind the King's chair. Blood, however, far from falling into the hands of the constables, was soon engaged in a brave scheme, which was more likely to mend or end a broken soldier's fortunes than his attempt on the life of a great nobleman.

The Crown, the Sceptre, and the rest of the Royal regalia were in the Tower, where Sir Gilbert Talbot was Master, and a Mr Edwards keeper of the jewel-house. But why leave them there?

One fine May morning in 1671 a venerable gentleman, accompanied by a lady of equally reputable demeanour, appeared at the Tower. They were up from the country and wanted to see the Crown jewels, so that to friends

[1] Theophilus Lucas's *Gamesters*.

and neighbours they might boast of having enjoyed a sight of one of the chief wonders of London town.

Mr Edwards, the keeper of the jewels, was an old man. The long cloak, cassock and canonical girdle worn by the aged gentleman who had come thither impelled by such naïve curiosity, bespoke a parson, and Mr Edwards would gladly oblige one of so worthy a calling. His wife, too, looked so sweet a gentlewoman that it was a pleasure to entertain her.

But the sweet gentlewoman was of delicate constitution! She grew weak from the exertion of enjoying the jewels. Would good Master Edwards give her a little cordial, and presently she would be well again?

Master Edwards had a soft heart and his good lady was no less kind. They took the parson's wife to their chamber and made her repose on the bed, and while the grateful cordial stirred her blood and renewed her feeble strength, the parson and Mr Edwards became good friends, as plain, downright Englishmen will.

In a few days the parson called again. This time to return thanks for hospitality so frankly rendered, and to offer to Mrs Edwards, as a memento of her civility, a pair of gloves. Mr Edwards's stock of good-nature was not exhausted. He asked the parson to dine with them, which was just what his reverence most desired.

The table was graced by a very pretty girl, who helped to make the grim old Tower a paradise for the keeper of the jewels and his wife. This was their daughter, and when they were lonely and sick at heart for their son far away at the war in Flanders, the girl was more to them than all the gems in their wardenship.

The benevolent parson was smitten by this winsome lass. And when occasion offered he broached to her father a proposal for robbing him of this fairest jewel in his keeping.[1] His reverence had a nephew, a young

[1] Timbs's *Romance of London*.

fellow of substance, who could give the girl an honest country heart and a good home. Edwards was old and poor, his son was a soldier, and doubtless as poor as his sire, so that if the father were taken away his pretty daughter would be a helpless, homeless orphan, able to do but little service for either her mother or herself. In imagination the ingenuous old keeper saw, doubtless, the nephew, a brawny rustic, with a big heart worn on his sleeve, making of his darling an idol, and for her sake kind to all she loved.

So it was arranged that this bucolic Romeo should come to woo the fair maid of the Tower at the Arcadian hour of seven o'clock in the morning.

When the birds were singing on the eaves, in the battered recesses of the turrets, and in a thousand crevices of the moat, the parson came to the palace-fortress, bringing his nephew with him.

Master Edwards was so happy he doubtless hardly noticed, or if he noticed, hardly cared, that the parson had brought with him two other friends, bumpkins who had to return to their pasturage that evening, and who should either miss seeing the regalia altogether, or otherwise invade him at that early hour, when even lovers might be excused for having only one eye wide open.

Mrs Edwards did not descend to receive the visitors. The poor lady, struggling with her ribbons, and wondering if the girl would please the gallant, and whether breakfast would please them all, may well have cursed her daughter's ill-fortune in not having found favour with a town-bred beau, who would come to pay his addresses at a more convenient hour, nearer to the song of the nightingale than to the song of the lark.

The maid herself, as became a modest lass, tarried over her toilet, lest the worthy nephew should misconstrue haste to welcome him into indelicate haste to wed him. And wed him she might not after all. But whether

she did or not she would deck herself gaily to bewitch the gallant.

The parson suggested that his companions should be shown the jewels while awaiting his wife, who would arrive presently, to smile upon the meeting of the young couple, and the amiable Edwards led the way to the room where reposed the Crown of England.

Instantly the parson closed the door. As the bolt shot into its socket the scales fell from the old keeper's eyes. The parson was the anointed of the Lord no longer, but the captain of a band of brigands, each armed with dagger and pistols and a rapier blade concealed as a walking-cane.

A gag was clapped into the old man's mouth. They told him they were there to have the Crown and Globe and Sceptre. If he was quiet they would spare his life, but at an attempt to alarm the fortress they would destroy him.

But the valiant old keeper would do his duty with Death gaping into his eyes. He made all the noise he could, but before he could make much they had brought down upon his skull a mallet, which they carried to beat flat the Crown, that it might be hidden away the easier beneath their cloaks. A thrust from a dagger supplemented the mallet. . . . And then to their work.

The young Romeo was posted outside as sentinel, and a serving-wench seeing him there told her young mistress she had seen her lover, but the maid was still in no hurry to see him.

The parson, in whom Ormond's friend, Colonel Blood, has doubtless been recognized, meanwhile concealed the Crown in his cloak. One of his comrades put the Orb in his breeches. The Sceptre was not fashioned for their convenience. Yet they dare not flout Fortune by leaving it behind. They began therefore to file it asunder.[1]

[1] Timbs's *Romance of London.*

At this juncture Heaven intervened in the drama, to direct it to a climax undreamt of by the authors.

Two young officers, carrying themselves like veterans, as well they might, for they had but just come from the battlefields of Flanders, marched up to the keeper's lodgings.

One of them was young Edwards, who had been serving under Sir John Talbot. The other was a comrade-in-arms, Captain Berkman.

Blood's sentinel challenged the pair. But little heed did they pay to him. These fellows, fresh from the palisades, might be baulked only by lead or steel. . . .

Still that Sceptre resisted the file. Desperately the robbers assailed the obstinate symbol of Royal power. . . . What was that? Not old Edwards? He lay still as a corpse under their noses. Not the rasping of the file! . . . It was the alarm. To the devil with the Sceptre. The Crown and the Orb, the Orb and the Crown, these should serve as the reward of their morning's work, and with these Blood and his merry men were gone in a twinkling.

But not fast enough. . . .

There was a commotion in the keeper's lodgings that might have awakened the dead.

Old Edwards, once more conscious, and freed by friendly hands from the gag, was bellowing:

"Treason! Murder!"

Miss Edwards heard that cry as she attired herself for the wooing, and turned in terror with trembling hands and sinking limbs. . . . But here was her soldier-brother back in the very nick of time to save them all from she knew not what. So she added her shrieks to swell the commotion, and while the keeper's lodgings rang with the cries of panic-stricken women, the two young officers had taken in the situation and were already hot on the heels of the runaways. Fast and furious they ran, shouting as they went. The warder on the drawbridge heard the alarm, and single-handed he essayed to

stop the villains. But Blood let fly with a pistol and down he dropped.

Out through the gates they passed, and for their lives they ran to where their horses awaited them. Once in the saddle, and with their horses' heads turned to the sea, it would go hard with them if they did not succeed in making the Royal regalia their own indeed.

But Blood was not so fleet of foot as his pursuers, and Berkman was on him before he could reach his stirrup. Blood fired on him, but the officer dodged the bullet, and then it was a hand-to-hand fight for the Crown.

While they struggled some of the jewels rolled out of their setting into the dust. But at length Blood surrendered.

His companion, Parrot, a dyer, who was carrying the Orb and the finest jewel of the sceptre, was also made prisoner. The rest of the gang were also secured.

Instantly news of the outrage was conveyed to Whitehall by Sir Gilbert Talbot. At first Talbot was ordered to take the depositions of the prisoners. But Charles suddenly changed his mind and ordered Blood and his accomplices to be brought to the palace.

Blood carried himself with the air of a man who had nothing to repent of and nothing to fear.

As to his latest exploit he boasted that "it was a gallant if unsuccessful attempt, for it was for a Crown."

This was a sally that Charles could relish, the more so as the Crown was his own; for wit, pointed with impudence, seldom failed to put His Majesty in good humour.

Asked as to his attack upon Ormond, for which he was now also to answer, for the first time he admitted his guilt. But he would tell nothing of his associates, as it was his code "never to betray a friend's life."

And now Blood played a card which was bound to save or ruin him, as bold a card as was ever played by man in such plight.

He confessed that his misdeeds included a plan to

assassinate the King himself. He avowed that he had once concealed himself on the river bank, above Battersea, in order to shoot His Majesty while bathing in the Thames at Chelsea. That he had actually raised his piece to fire, when "his heart was checked by an awe of Majesty."

The story is thought to have been false, and concocted solely to intimidate the King. Blood declared that there was much discontent with the King, but that by mercy he might disarm enemies as daring as he had shown himself.

Charles pardoned Blood, and gave him five hundred a year. But the rascal was not content. He went into "good society" and attached himself as a sort of bravo to the Court, where "many gentlemen courted his acquaintance, as the Indians pray to the Devil that he may not hurt them."

The easy-going King, who ruled his friends by playing on their friendship, and his enemies by being civil to them, none the less astonished the town by his treatment of Blood.

To Ormond, Charles sent Arlington to give reasons why the Duke should not prosecute his enemy. Ormond saved the Minister the trouble of worthless excuses.

"There can be no reason," he said, "but the King's command."

At length the Colonel quarrelled with Buckingham, who obtained ten thousand pounds damages against him for libel. Blood could not pay and was thrown into prison. He found bail, but that was the end. He died a little later.

The people, however, would not believe that the notorious bully was mortal. The story so often told of famous men, and of infamous ones, was repeated of this rascal, that he was not really resting in the grave in New Chapel Yard, Broadway, Westminster, which was said to be his. So the body was exhumed, and an inquest held, and all doubts forever set at rest that he was really dead.

But the greatest mystery of all remained, and must, it appears, remain forever, as to why a King of England should have made friends with such a desperado, given him a pension, and established him as a courtier, instead of handing him over to the hangman.

CHAPTER XX

WARFARE IN THE SERAGLIO

IN 1675 a tract was published arguing that Parliament should enact a law to punish with death the man who stole another's wife.[1] It was a sign of the times, for such theft was the best diversion of a man of fashion.

To the old writer's appeal Parliament was discreetly deaf. It had other business on hands, for the worst dissensions of "the forties" had been revived, and an acute observer might have seen that events at Westminster were shaping once more towards Revolution.

The Treaty of Dover had fissured and cross-fissured the whole field of politics by making the corruption of English politicians the first business of the statesmen of Holland and of France. It had stimulated the growing feeling in favour of the exclusion of the Duke of York from the throne by associating Catholicism in the minds of the people with subservience to Louis; and once the idea of diverting the succession had taken root there was no longer any limit to confusion, none to faction. Or if limit there were, it could only be found in the number of persons who chose to regard themselves, or would be regarded by others, as suitable aspirants for regal honours. This then was the legacy left by Henrietta of Orleans to the land of her birth, and to the brother she loved so well, a legacy of stark staring ruin. Little dreaming but that she had done Charles good service, she it was who, in

[1] "Letters to an M.P.," *Harleian Miscellany.*

some sense, wove the banner which by-and-by was to serve the turn of William of Orange, and serve him well.

No wonder the glamour of Royalty had been dispelled in a decade and a half. The gentry who were not hangers-on of the Court, and the sober and sedate middle classes, were sick of political strife, of religious feuds, of social anarchy, of profligacy in high places, of lawlessness in their superiors and inferiors. They were for letting things drift quietly; and while holding what they had, prayed that when their children's time should come happier days might dawn for England.

Few eyes had been dry on that day when Charles had returned to his own. But disgrace and treachery had rewarded their loyalty. If sensible men were still loyal, it was because they feared the ills they knew less than others they could not wot of. The despair on the one hand, the reckless, the soulless indifference which on the other had settled on the country, were well expressed by the boon companion who, booted and spurred, presented himself one day before the King.

"Whither are you going?" demanded Charles.

"To hell, sir, to fetch up Oliver Cromwell to look after the affairs of England, for his successor never will," was the swift reply.

The speaker was Killigrew. The jest was significant beyond anything that could come from worthier lips. To see King and country go to the devil amused Killigrew. But they had travelled far along the road when one who always rubbed shoulders with the vanguard could see something of the tragedy of that laughing pilgrimage.

Louise de Querouaille was the visible embodiment of the new vassalage of England, for the King's French mistress was more than a woman of gallantry, more than a glutton for gold and titles. She was a diplomatist, a woman who cajoled by soft endearments, or by tears,

and won her way by silence, where silence was golden.

According to Evelyn her apartments in the palace were far more gorgeous than those of the Queen. His reference to the disgraced maid-of-honour forms, in its way, an eloquent epitome of the ways of the Court and manners of the time. "Following His Majesty through the gallery I went," he says, "with the few who attended him, into the Duchess of Portsmouth's dressing-room, within her bed-chamber, where she was in her morning loose-garment, her maid combing, newly out of her bed, His Majesty and the gallants standing about her; but that which engaged my curiosity was the rich and splendid furniture of this woman's apartment, now twice or thrice pulled down and rebuilt to satisfy her prodigal and expensive pleasures, while Her Majesty does not exceed some gentlemen's wives in furniture and accommodation. Here I saw the new fabric of French tapestry; for design, tenderness of work, and incomparable imitation of the best paintings, beyond anything I had ever beheld. Some pieces had Versailles, St Germains, and other palaces of the French King, with huntings, figures, and landscapes, exotic fowls, and all to the life, rarely done. Then for Japanese cabinets, screens, pendule clocks, great vases of wrought plate, tables, stands, chimney furniture, sconces, branches, brasiers, etc., all of massive silver, and out of number; besides some of His Majesty's best paintings." These last had, it is said, been removed from the Queen's apartments.

The public saw honours showered on this French light-o'-love as they had never been showered upon an honest woman. Charles had made her Baroness Peterfield, Countess of Farnham and Duchess of Portsmouth. Other honours came from France. Louis made her Duchess of Aubigny, as well he might, for her services to his country might have brought her to the block.[1]

[1] Jameson's *Beauties of the Court of Charles II.*

To Louise is attributed the presumption of having thought of her son by the King as a possible successor to the throne.[1] The child succeeded in 1675 to the title of Duke of Richmond on the death of the husband of "La Belle Stuart," who had enjoyed for but a brief space the companionship of her rescuer from the Sovereign's stratagems. Nor was her resplendent beauty left to console her, for small-pox had left its cruel impress on the once lovely face, and one of her eyes was permanently injured.

When Louise de Querouaille asked the Royal title of Richmond for her son, Cleveland demanded that her son should have precedence over the "brat of a French hussy" with the title of Duke of Grafton. Charles solved the difficulty in his own easy-going way by making both children Dukes. Still "the French hussy" had the best of it. Portsmouth got the Lord Treasurer to receive her attorney at midnight, just as he was stepping into his coach to go to Bath and affix the Seal to the patent of the Duke of Richmond. Next morning Barbara's attorney knocked at the great man's door. But too late. He had gone to take the waters in the West. After that Her Grace of Cleveland received as solace a pension of ten thousand pounds. But these favours could not be dispensed singly, and Louise likewise had to have her pension.

In this strange Court, where courtesans were the leaders of statecraft, consternation was caused by the news that the most beautiful woman in Europe had landed on the shores of England. Louise was dismayed, as well she might, her plight being equivalent to that of a Queen who finds her dominions invaded by an invincible general. The newcomer was Hortense Mancini, Duchess of Mazarin.

When Charles was a poor exile he had met and loved Hortense, as many another gallant had done. He was

[1] "Articles of High Treason against the Duchess of Portsmouth," *Harleian Miscellany*.

ready to raise her to the throne of England if ever it should be his, which was then a gloomy prospect. So it seemed, at all events, to Cardinal Mazarin.

Hortense was the wonder and delight even of the French courtiers, where vivacity was the commonest charm. A spirit of mischief possessed her from her cradle, a spirit that never was exorcised. As a girl she seemed to have no soul, or one that only slept. The lessons of her reverend uncle were written on sand. Beautiful as a dream, she had no reverence for anything, not even for gold, and when she could lay her hands upon it she flung it through the windows of her uncle's palace, and amused herself watching the mob below fighting like tigers for this manna from heaven.

With such a dare-devil there were only two systems of treatment. One was a convent. The other was marriage. Fate and the Duke of Meilleraye decided for marriage. The Duke was enchanted with the thirteen-year-old vixen, all laughter and airy prattle, with dainty feet always tripping into trouble. He would take her for his own and trust to Providence that luck would come of his rashness. The Cardinal was honest. "Have her sister Mary," he said. But Meilleraye was bereft of his senses. Mary was all very well. But Hortense was an angel of loveliness. Not a good angel, doubtless. But no matter. She was only thirteen. There was plenty of time for her to learn sense. So the madcap became a Duchess of France.

Poor Meilleraye! The Cardinal died, leaving the pair a great fortune, on condition that they took his name. The Duke, by this time, would probably have been happy to be rid of name and fortune, if only his bride could have been made to vanish into space. But he had won the greatest prize amongst the beauties of his day, and she was even more difficult to get rid of than to win. To make matters worse for the poor husband, though his responsibilities were such as needed the full complement

of human wisdom for their due fulfilment, he was, in fact, rather eccentric. He fancied himself gifted with extraordinary powers, something indefinable in the nature of a faculty of intuition or inspiration, something at which the whole Court laughed behind his back, and touched their foreheads significantly. He and his gifts were thus a stock jest amongst companions, to whom nothing was too sacred, nothing too pitiful for laughter.

After six years, Hortense, surfeited with the luxury of an inspired partner, applied for a separation. The ground of her claim was the Duke's rigorous sanctity, his jealousy, and his extravagance in almsgiving. While the suit was pending she retired to a convent. The nuns were not happy with their guest, who had as her companion Madame de Courcelles. Between them they turned the convent into a bedlam.

Once when the community met in the choir the faces of the sisters, old and young, were smeared with black. They rubbed their eyes; but the more they rubbed the plainer they saw white-black faces everywhere. It looked, indeed, as if the devil had managed to enter the holy place and bewitch them. And so he had, taking a form as entrancing as the Genius of Mischief had ever the luck to find ready for his adoption. The strange visitation was inquired into, and was traced to the holy-water fount, into which ink had been poured by the ladies from Versailles. . . . At dead of night the convent rang with the barking of dogs, racing hither and thither like a pack in full cry after their quarry. It was the Duchess and her companion racing through the corridors just to enliven the awful silence of the cloisters. There were other pranks. But at length the nuns had enough, and the beautiful Hortense was banished into the cold world, much to her own satisfaction; for as no convent would have her, and they could not send her to prison, she was permitted to return to the Mazarin palace to await there the result of her suit.

She grew weary, however, of waiting. Satisfied that the verdict would be unfavourable, she determined to map out a new career for herself before the conclusion of the litigation should warrant the King in making plans for her future. In male attire she entered a carriage and drove away from the Hotel Mazarin. When her husband found the bird had flown he appealed to His Majesty to have her taken at the frontier. But too late. By the time the frontier guards had been aroused the beauty had already shaken from her shoes the dust of France and was ranging at liberty over Europe.

Still in male attire, she and the maid, who played the part of esquire to the cavalier, reached Rome. But France was the land for Hortense, and soon she was back again incognita. That lovely face, those irrepressible spirits, could not, however, remain unknown, and soon she had to fly again. At length she set her heart on England, the land of Queens of the left hand. There she arrived in 1678. Charles immediately succumbed to her charms. To the dismay of Louise, and the delight of less-favoured ladies, she was established by Charles in St James's Palace, with four thousand pounds a year. The aged Waller strung his lyre in her honour and sung:

> "When through the world Mazarin had run,
> Bright as her fellow-traveller the Sun;
> Hither at length the Roman eagle flies,
> As the last triumph of her conquering eyes."

The Roman eagle was not, however, to be for long the captive of Charles Stuart. She was not to be enslaved by anything that Charles could give her. Wealth greater than even he could command she had flung from her, this madcap who had showered gold on the rabble of Paris. He had wit, and humour, and cynicism, but so too had this dazzling creature, and in greater measure even than he. His will was the wind's will, and his fancies were as changeable as the wind. Caprice in his pleasures

was his Royal prerogative, the only one, indeed, he valued. But Hortense was a Queen in her own fashion, in so much as she commanded the homage of all men, and yielded none to any man, and she, too, would smile where and when, and on whom she pleased.

Despite her quarters in St James's and her four thousand a year, she fell in love with the Prince of Monaco, then visiting England. This whim of hers choked at its source the stream of English gold. Quarter-day came, but no pension. Instead there was Monaco. And Louise was once more happy.

Of those who rejoiced in the passing triumph of Mazarin, and perhaps regretted her fate, there was one who, like Louise, had a share in the affection of Charles, but, unlike Louise, was not bred to Courts. She had been reared in a house of ill-repute; had earned her first pence selling oranges in Drury Lane Theatre, had received her first initiation into the world of luxury and leisure from a courtier, of whom it was written:

"None ever had so strange an art
His passion to convey,
Into a list'ning virgin's heart,
And steal her soul away."

This gallant was Lord Buckhurst, afterwards Earl of Dorset, and the girl whom he had loved for a little while was Nell Gwynne. Charles succeeded Buckhurst in Nelly's affections, and soon this beautiful orange-girl became the idol of the town, not because the town saw anything in her to love, so much as that it hated the Frenchwoman of ancient lineage, who had taken possession of the Court, and regarded the realm as her very own. Louise was a Catholic. But Nelly was a Protestant! Never was religion more curiously personified than in these champions. She who stood in the minds of the people for the Established faith and pure and primitive Christianity was assailed at Oxford one day by the mob.

They thought they had caught the Duchess of Portsmouth, and, thronging round the coach, were wild to roll what they regarded as the personification of Popery in the mire! Suddenly a pretty head was thrust from the window, and laughing eyes that no one could mistake for those of a daughter of France subdued the howling rabble.

"Pray, good people, be civil," she cried, "I am the Protestant. . . .!"[1]

The delighted mob, thus bluntly reassured as to her creed and her morals, let her proceed with hearty goodwill.

Both Louise and Nell were faithful to Charles. And for this reason, perhaps, he cared for them more than for greater beauties who, for a time, may have rivalled them. Yet no women could be more different. The Frenchwoman was proud and jealous, and disposed to despise persons of her own base trade, to regard Charles as her own special property. Poor Nell never escaped from the ideas of that terrible home in which she was nurtured. She was a common slut. She knew it. She told the mob with a laugh what she was. Louise would have died before the words should pass her lips.

Madame Sevigne has weighed up both women. Louise, she wrote, "amasses treasure and makes herself feared and respected by as many as she can, but she did not foresee that she would find a rival in a young actress, whom the King dotes on. . . . He divides his care, his time and his wealth between these two. The actress is as haughty as mademoiselle; she insults her, grimaces at her, attacks her, frequently steals the King from her, and boasts whenever he gives her the preference. She is young, indiscreet, confident, wild. . . . She sings, dances, acts her part with a good grace. . . . With regard to Mademoiselle Querouaille she reasons thus: This lady pretends to be a person of quality, says she is related to the best families in France. Whenever any person of

[1] Cunningham's *Life of Nell Gwynne*

distinction dies she puts on mourning. If she be a lady of quality, why does she demean herself to be a courtesan? She ought to die of shame. As for me, it is my profession. I do not pretend to be anything better! . . ."

While Louise would have people fear and respect her by insisting on the greatness of her family, Nell was content to make King and people laugh with her, or against her, or against her rival. If they laughed it was enough. Louise's foibles made it an easy matter to make her appear ridiculous. Madame Sevigne has alluded, in the quotation just given, to her countrywoman's weakness for donning mourning on the death of august personages. On one occasion of the kind Nelly followed suit. She, too, wore the garb of sorrow. In the hearing of the Duchess she was asked to explain her attire.

"Oh," said Nell, "have you not heard of my loss in the death of the Cham of Tartary?"

"And what relation was the Cham to you?" pursued the mischievous questioner.

"Exactly the same relation that the Prince of —— was to Mademoiselle Querouaille."

As the King's vagrant affections centred more and more on these two women, he paid for such constancy as was his by their constant bickerings. The King had sown the tares, and as he had sown so should he reap. The great art was to know how to be indifferent, to make the best of the reign of the vultures. In the great gallery at Whitehall the King might any night be seen keeping the bank, while courtiers and ladies and courtesans gambled and jested, and luscious music flooded the salon with the gilded melody of sweet harmonies that made the heart young and immortal. In the palace there were always gold, and music, and light, and beauty. But around the palace the clamour of faction was raging. The people were starving. Wise men were trembling for the future. The men about town raked, and gambled, and fought, and, if they were rich enough, or influential enough, did

murder too with impunity; and of them all the wildest, the handsomest, the gayest, the most abandoned, was the King's son, James, Duke of Monmouth, whom his boon companions toasted in their secret orgies as Prince of Wales.

CHAPTER XXI

LUCY WALTERS AND HER SON

THIS fellow to whom they drank as Prince of Wales was not indeed the King's eldest son. That distinction belonged to one who had but once set foot in England. When Charles was but a boy, and his troubles were but commencing, he had fallen in love with a young lady of a cavalier family in Jersey. Fate was in a way kind to the lady, kinder than her lover. A boy was born to her. But what became of him no man knows, and history cannot even record his mother's name. The boy entered the Society of Jesus, and as a soldier of the Cross the world forgot him and the romance of the foolish maid.

Monmouth was the King's second son. His mother was perhaps the most beautiful of all the women who at one time or another enslaved the fancy of Charles.

The family of Walters in Pembrokeshire had fought for the Royal cause, and for that had lost all. Out from the ruined home of her ancestors there went a lovely girl, who, in other days, would have found a refuge behind the ivied walls of some ancient abbey. But for Lucy Walters there was no asylum, and to see this Welsh girl, with eyes of melting sweetness, was to pity and to love her. Her descent was swift and deep, and in London the country girl fell into the hands of Algernon Sydney, then into Robert Sydney's. She was still with Robert when Charles cast eyes upon her and would have her for his own. Swiftly sped the bargain, and to Lucy and her boy-paramour was soon born a baby-boy, so beautiful that the greatest artists of the day vainly tried to portray the exquisite delicacy of his features.

Then Charles was called away, and Lucy, left to herself in a strange land, went the way she had gone in London. She had chosen the broad, smooth path to luxury, but the wild blood would not be worldly-wise. She paid the price but threw away the reward of her frailty. And, alienated by her infidelity, Charles would return to her no more.

From the first it was said that Charles and Lucy were man and wife. Lucy's friends were naturally glad of any excuse to say so. Some would say it without excuse. Others said it out of politeness, for the Hague was not London or Paris, and living amongst staid and virtuous folk the wildest cavaliers tried a little to seem worthy of their hosts. The effort was not always free from difficulty and embarrassment, and if a good-natured lie, which no one altogether believed, unless he wanted to, smoothed matters, no good Royalist hesitated to speak it, or, for that matter, to swear it with a thumping oath.

Meanwhile, Lucy was kept at the King's expense, while her boy was put out to nurse. The King's party was eager to get the child away from her altogether. But the mother would not hear of it. Force was tried. The child was kidnapped. But they were dealing with a desperate woman, and the result was a public scandal. Lucy fled to Maeslandsluce, at the mouth of the Meuse, fearing the kidnappers would hasten to England with the prize. Straight she went to the Mayor and publicly recited the story of her wrongs.[1] His worship, touched by her beauty and distress, ordered search to be made for the child, and in a couple of weeks the honest burghers were able to return him once again to the custody of his mother.

But the restoration of her boy did not suffice to protect Lucy from temptation. The unhappy Welsh girl's character was altogether without balance. All weakness, all frailty, for her there was no halting-place on the road

[1] *Life of Monmouth.*

to destruction, no turning back, while she could still revel in the wild intoxication of a precipitous descent.

The scandal of her life was more than the Dutch could endure. She seems to have stood in peril of being banished from Holland as "an infamous person, and by sound of drum." But eventually she was sent away to England, with a promise of an annuity. She was not, however, to find rest in London. Cromwell's spies warned him of her coming, and of "Master Jockey's," as the King's son was called. She was sent to the Tower as a spy, but she was not worth her quarters, so was shipped back to the land whence she had come. The order was made out in Cromwell's own handwriting, who, seemingly in a mood for jest, referred to "the Lady of Pleasure and the young Heir," who were to be set "on shoar in Flanders, which is no ordinary courtesie."

If Lucy was desperate, the Royalists were no less in despair. It was necessary to get control of this boy at any price, whom Cromwell dared to call "the young heir." There was a wild commotion in the streets of Brussels when a Colonel Slingsby tried to abduct the boy. The mother was too much for the Colonel. The mob sided with her, and the only result was another public scandal, to the injury of the Prince. In the end, however, she surrendered the child, and in the flower of her youth the beautiful Lucy, who was to make so bold a bid for the Crown of England, died in Paris, without a sou to bury her.[1]

The King appointed a Scot named Thomas Ross as his son's tutor. This man seems to have been the first to think of Lucy's son as Prince of Wales.

Ross applied to Dr Cosin, the Bishop of Durham, to help him. The bishop had probably met Lucy Walters in Paris, and had, doubtless, exercised influence for good over the hapless outcast. Ross boldly proposed that the bishop should draw up a certificate of marriage between

[1] *Life of Monmouth.*

Lucy and Charles, which was to be used only after its author's death. Cosin was too honest for such a deed. He told the King. Charles kept his own counsel, and Ross was mildly punished with the loss of his place, a loss that seemingly was but temporary.

Around that proposal, however, grew up in later years the story of "The Black Box," the box that was said to contain the title-deeds to the Crown of these islands, but which, in truth, contained nothing, unless indeed it might be a death-warrant.

Soon after the Monarchy was restored and the King's son, now a boy of twelve, was brought to England. The King lavished affection on him, and the whole Court fell in love with him. It was, as we know, the age of boy-and girl marriages, and Charles looked round amongst his nobles for an heiress who might be mated with his son.

His Majesty's choice fell upon Anne Scott, Countess of Buccleuch, a little girl of eleven.

Little Anne was an immense heiress in her own right as well as a peeress of Scotland, and a marriage with the son of Lucy Walters, the drab of Dutch cities, was for her but a doubtful honour. By Scottish law the bridegroom would take the lady's rank, so the nameless boy would become, at a step, a rich noble of ancient title. But it was not enough. The King was urged to do something for his son, and, in opposition to his advisers, he raised him to the Dukedom of Monmouth, with precedence over all peers not of the Blood Royal.

Anne Scott had her share of beauty, and with it had tact and wit and much wisdom, and what was rarest of all, virtue. Her boy-husband had nothing in common with this dignified child-bride, who delighted in books and in the acquisition of knowledge. In taverns and gambling-dens, and houses of the worst repute, amongst the wildest men about town, Monmouth learned the only lessons to his taste. A smile from this young Duke turned the easily-turned heads of the ladies of the Court, whether

maids or matrons, and utterly spoiled by his successes in the boudoir, and the kindness shown him by the King, he soon became the terror of husbands, the despair of lovers.[1]

The whole town turned out to Hyde Park one autumn day to see the Life Guards parade in honour of the new captain of the first troop. Gaily the sun shone on the gallant array, on silver and gold and waving plumes, as the new captain galloped to his station, and his sword flashed from its sheath to lead his proud command. The handsome giants who saluted the captain were the boldest and gayest blades in town, hard fighters, hard drinkers, ready to gamble away their souls, if gamblers could be found to play for the stake. But the most hardened rake amongst them need not have been ashamed to yield precedence to the troop-commander, for raking was his trade. The genius, the passion for it, had come to him in his mother's arms. And he had completed his apprenticeship at the Restoration Court, for the new captain was none other than the Duke of Monmouth.

One, perhaps, could name no better type of the comrades of whom Monmouth now became the captain than Jack Ogle, familiar in the literature of the day as "Mad Ogle." Jack and his sister were early left orphans, and were then placed under the protection of the Inchiquin family. The girl was taken into the service of the Countess of Inchiquin. For her brother a commission was obtained in the Life Guards.

Following the example of greater ladies, Anne Ogle left the Inchiquin household for a home of her own, provided for her by the Duke of York; while Jack Ogle won fame as a master of cards and dice, a likely fellow in a brawl, and one well accustomed to the air of Hyde Park at the dawn, when the sun was wont to dance on pretty play with the rapiers. Any cause, or no cause, was good enough for a duel with young Ogle, who, part gentleman,

[1] Grammont's *Memoirs*.

part cut-throat, always a comedian, was ever welcome at Whitehall.

When the harvest of the gaming-tables was low, Ogle turned for money to Anne's exchequer. But even in his vices York was methodical, and Mistress Ogle's coffers were hard put to it to support her brother's extravagance. Failure to help him had its embarrassments. Once, when his pockets were empty, he repaired to his sister's lodgings. There he found it possible to change his attire for a suit belonging to the Duke of York.[1] Thus arrayed his pockets were no longer empty. He had a fine gold watch to tell the time, but as he had but meagre curiosity on the point, it might, if necessity arose, be made to serve a more immediately useful purpose at the pawnbroker's. The coat, too, was decorated with a gorgeous star, and there was some loose money to burn the gambler's fingers.

Bravely arrayed in the Prince's clothing, Ogle left his sister's lodgings, and, according to the chronicler, the climax came in Pall Mall, presumably the next day. The Duke was sauntering along the fashionable promenade, when he caught sight of his own reflection, sauntering too. From head to heel, there was his perfect double, hat, coat, breeches, boots, sword and star. The Duke was ready to die of chagrin. Curses on all the Ogles, mad ones and pretty ones alike. . . . Forty guineas purchased back His Highness's wardrobe.

If Monmouth heard of this affair, Ogle lost none of his favour, for little love was lost between uncle and nephew. This fellow seems indeed to have been above discipline, and was encouraged in his impudence by Monmouth, who even condescended to make sport of him at a regimental parade.

Then, as now, the Life Guards wore red cloaks. Ogle lost his at play, and before he could make good the loss he had to parade with his troop in the Park. Ogle scoured London in vain for a red cloak. Red cloaks could not be

[1] Theophilus Lucas's *Gamesters*.

borrowed. Purchased they might be, but only for gold paid down on the counter, for mad Ogle had no credit with banker or tailor. At his sister's lodgings there was no relief for this distress. Anne had silks and satins, and lovely laces, velvets and ribbons, but devil a red cloak that would cover a drummer boy, much less a giant.

It was sad that disgrace and humiliation should overtake a gallant officer for so trifling an affair. Not lightly would he submit to be crushed. Jack's lodgings were at White Friars, a veritable republic of rascals, as much outside the law as though oceans guarded its frontiers. Plenty of Ogle's neighbours in this Alsatia would have solved the difficulty in which the gallant guardsman found himself by cutting the throat of somebody who possessed the coveted garment. But Jack had no mind to die on the gallows. Though he slept in White Friars his tastes were those of Whitehall. Though murder was, to some extent, his trade, he had his own standard, and would murder as he conceived a gentleman should. In the midst of his melancholy reflections a light dawned upon him.

His landlady sometimes permitted him to catch a glimpse of a petticoat of red as brilliant as ever covered a guardsman's back. In that homely vision he now saw salvation. The red petticoat had not the flowing skirts of his vanished cloak. But it was of the right hue. If cleverly folded it would pass for the reality, unless the weather should prove unfavourable, when the order "to cloak" would be given to the troops, with disastrous results for one doughty fellow.

But Ogle was a gamester, and he who was accustomed to stake all he had to lose, and a trifle more perhaps, on the hazard of the dice, was not to be cowed by the odds that a summer's day would prove his undoing and disclose his greatcoat to be a fraud, borrowed from a woman's wardrobe.

When the morning of the parade arrived the sun shone

high in the heavens, a true Ogle sun, and the gambler was happy. The neat red bundle strapped behind his saddle looked as bright as the most fastidious officer could desire. His cloak might indeed have only just left the tailor's hands, and the fellow seemed, if anything, to have given him even a gayer dye than the letter of the regulations would approve. But that was nothing. In the Life Guards, above all, in Monmouth's troop, they did not haggle about a shade on this side or that, so that the fabric was one fit for dandies, and these the King's own gentlemen. Mad Ogle trotted out of White Friars, pursued with blessings from his landlady, for the good wife had, in a sense, been dragged from obscurity by the whirligig of fortune to lend something of her native grace to a Royal review. Her petticoat, so long and honourably worn in modest retirement, had entered the service of the King to save the name and fame of an ancient Devon family. If her poor head swam, if her brain was in a whirl, she was, after all, but a humble woman. Suddenly indeed had the greatness of a unique sacrifice overtaken her. It might all be a dream only that her red flannel petticoat was gone out of her simple life to fulfil in the household cavalry its high destiny.

Meanwhile, Ogle had reached the Park, where his comrades, well aware of the embarrassments of his exchequer, scrutinized with curiosity his equipment. The horse was a roadster, taken from the traces for the occasion. That was his usual mode of mounting himself. Saddle and saddle-cloth, bit and bridle, were all passed in review by that merry company, where all were brothers in arms, brothers in profligacy, brothers in the thousand and one embarrassments of the man who lives as though gold was as plentiful as air or water. And as, with many a jest, they put him through an informal inspection, they noticed a wondrous border on the hem of his folded cloak!

And then the trumpets sounded, the thin, clear, rollicking music winding over the Park to sleepy Ken-

sington, and to Whitehall, warning those who wanted to see the Household troops parade, that squadrons were formed and all ready for the gallant display.

Monmouth was there, in some respects the very beau ideal of a cavalry leader. He sat his charger like one bred to the saddle, and so he was, for his favourite sport was riding, and at Newmarket he rode races, a regular jockey-prince. Handsome fellows of the best families of England, and of Ireland, and Scotland too, bore arms in the Household cavalry, but one more handsome, or more dashing, could not be found than the son of the hapless Welsh girl, whose beauty had been bought and sold until beauty fled her, and Death was the only gallant who would take her in and give her shelter.

The young captain had a brief chat with his officers, and some sly fellow quietly hinted that the devil had enchanted Ogle's cloak, that the hem was gay with wondrous garniture such as never before had decked a soldier.

There was an evolution or two. Then the Duke gave the command " to cloak."

The troopers grinned. Ogle looked at the sky. A scorching sun beat down upon them. Was the Duke mad?

There was a rattle of accoutrements and the troop were cloaked, all save Ogle. Disaster had come. The landlady had blessed him in vain. Every eye was on him. He should do something and he did it. . . .

" If I can't cloak with you," he shouted, " I can petticoat with the best." [1]

Suiting the action to the word he pulled out the petticoat and donned it amidst roars of laughter from his comrades.

That was not the end of Ogle's soldiering. The great qualification for a soldier was readiness to fight. Ogle had that qualification, but when not using his sword the

[1] Theophilus Lucas's *Gamesters*.

best soldier was he who stormed Fortune at the gaming-table, and there, too, Ogle's prowess was the talk of the town. His luck was extraordinary. One day there was a regular tournament at Lockett's ordinary. Ogle challenged one after another out of a party of some twenty noblemen and gentlemen, and emptied the pockets of all.

Then he sent a porter out into the highway to gather together a company of poor people, and the fellow, having marshalled a hundred beggars, returned with them to the ordinary. Ogle ordered a shilling's worth of meat and drink for each, and well pleased with his work departed.

As he left who should he meet but Monmouth!

"I have been fulfilling the Scriptures," said the guardsman.

"What do you know of the Scriptures?" laughed the Duke.

"I have fed the hungry," said Jack, "and the rich I have sent away empty."

Dame Fortune may not have been Ogle's chief benefactress. His ready sword may, in a measure, have explained his luck. To many a swaggering courtier with a bold front and a "white liver," it must have been far more agreeable to lose a handful of guineas than to win Ogle's, and risk at the same time an invitation on any grounds, or no grounds, to take the "air in the country" in the early morning. An Ensign Chevalier of the Foot Guards once had the hardihood to win twenty guineas from Jack. A dispute ensued. The ensign was called upon to return his winnings. But Ogle had to deal with a rascal of his own kidney. What Chevalier had, would Chevalier hold. Eventually the pair met in Hyde Park, the duel being apparently fought for money, and, the ensign being wounded, Ogle as victor once more pocketed his precious guineas.

Thrown amongst men so reckless, so devoid of honour, with nothing indeed to check their native savagery save

such inborn kindness of disposition as survived the horrors of actual war, and the still more brutalizing effects of days and nights abandoned to profligacy, little wonder that Monmouth soon became notorious for his crimes. If his inferiors feared nothing, what check was there upon the favourite son of the King?

In the course of one of the many fierce debates in the Commons, caused by the confusion engendered in politics by the King's extravagance, his neglect of business, and his dependence on France, a bitter taunt was levelled against him by Sir John Coventry. A proposal was put forward to tax the theatres, inspired, doubtless, by the partiality of the Court for the beauties of the stage. In reply it was argued that the players were the King's servants, and existed for His Majesty's "pleasure." This argument must have tickled a House in which every man knew of the King's amours. Coventry was daring enough to utter his jest aloud. "Is the King's pleasure," he called out, "amongst the men or women players?"

The bloods of the Court chose to resent the taunt, and Monmouth executed their vengeance. Coventry lived in Suffolk Street. On his way thither from the Cock Tavern in Bow Street he was waylaid by a detachment of Monmouth's guardsmen. There were two officers, Sandys and O'Brien, a son of Lord Inchiquin, and thirteen troopers. Against such odds there was no chance. Coventry defended himself gallantly. Right and left he slashed with his sword, for he knew that amongst such rascals his life was not worth a moment's purchase. Not till he had wounded some of his assailants was he disarmed. Then they beat him to the ground, and his nose was cut to the bone "to teach him respect for His Majesty." [1]

Yet a little later Monmouth was concerned in a darker crime. With two other Dukes and a party of men about town, Monmouth found himself at Whetstone Park, a disreputable district near Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. The

[1] *The Romance of London*, by John Timbs.

" Hectors " kept their orgy so rowdily that the watch tried to enter the house. In the *mêlée* that ensued the beadle, an old man named Peter Verinell, fell under the sword of Monmouth. His Majesty's son, handsome Monmouth, the spoiled darling of the ladies, was a murderer, his hands red with the blood of a poor old man out to keep the King's peace for his daily bread.

The day when a monarch of England would have justice done, even though punishment should fall on his own flesh and blood, had passed. To save his son from the proper penalty of his crimes Charles granted him a pardon under the Great Seal for all " murder, homicides and felonyes . . . committed either by himself alone or together with any other person or persons."

Verinell's blood cried in vain for vengeance. No. Not altogether in vain. The King was deaf. And when the King was deaf whose business was it to hear? . . . But, in time, the cry of blood unavenged pierced the skies, and Monmouth awoke one morning to meet the fate that he had in sport, one merry evening, meted out to old Peter Verinell. And as the old man had whined in vain for the mercy of life, so too did he, for what cared Fate for prince or churl when bent on requiting cruel wrong with dramatic chastisement?

Such was the candidate chosen for the Crown in competition with James, Duke of York, by Ashley, Lord Shaftesbury, and his supporters. When the project of supplanting his brother with the son of Lucy Walters was broached to Charles his reply was that " much as he loved Monmouth he would sooner see him hanged at Tyburn than own him for his legitimate son." And to the end Charles remained constant to this truth at least.

CHAPTER XXII

PANIC IN THE TOWN

IN the midst of all the intriguing, whilst the Court of England laughed, and the town followed the fashion thus set as well as it could; while blood flowed in the streets in lawless quarrels, and on the scaffold, as the law fell with savage fury on the poor; while, as the sequel to the anarchy of the hour, the country could only look forward to Civil War after the King's death, there was one woman, at least, who, the most harmless, the most innocent, the most sinned against in all the land, should have had all men for her friends. This was Catherine of Braganza. But friends she had none.

To crown her afflictions the redoubtable Titus Oates, the most infamous perjurer in the history of England, in the history perhaps of any land, made his entrance on to the stage of public life. Oates played for a great stake. He was to strike terror to the hearts of the people, and while the judgment and reason of the people were atrophied with panic, he was to ruin, at a blow, the Queen and the Duke of York. While the King was resolutely opposed to the policy of divorcing the Queen, a divorce was almost impossible. But it was not impossible to bring Catherine to the block; and to exclude the Duke of York from the throne, if his connection could be established with a Catholic conspiracy to restore the ancient faith.

It is said that one day Shaftesbury told Charles that "if he would but say he had been married to the Duke of Monmouth's mother, he would find those that would

swear it." But Charles was not despicable enough for such a crime. He would have none of it. Let the woman be. She had sins enough to forgive.

But Shaftesbury would shrink from no step, however disgraceful, that promised to advance his cause. For his purpose no ally was too base. He therefore enlisted, without compunction, the services of one in whose veracity he could never have believed for a moment. Without a Shaftesbury there could never have been a Titus Oates, and this fighting politician, in whom recklessness amounted to genius, is now best remembered as the sponsor and patron of the supremest liar in English history, a liar who went down to his grave steeped in the blood of innocent men.

The immortal perjurer was the son of an anabaptist weaver and preacher, who had entered the Church of England and was expelled for his crimes.[1] He then became a Catholic and studied at Valladolid. From this place he was also expelled. Next he managed to obtain admission to St Omer's, where he learned something of the affairs of the Jesuits. From St Omer's likewise he was driven in disgrace. And now he had at his command the raw material to make a fortune. All that was needed was the genius to exploit it. He knew, as it were, the technique of Roman Catholicism. Imagination, utterly devoid of scruple, did the rest.

On the 12th of August 1678 Charles was warned that a plot was afoot to murder him. Inquiries were made, and the proofs advanced were so clearly forgeries that the King laughed at them. York, however, insisted on having the matter laid before the Council; and further investigation brought into the field Master Titus Oates as the very man possessed of the infamous genius which would enable him to turn to full account the opportunity that had come for one who could lie, and lie on a heroic scale.

He said the Catholics were plotting the murder of the

[1] Theophilus Lucas's *Memoirs of Gamesters*.

King. That in itself might not have been regarded as an irreparable calamity, for His Majesty was now known to all men as a selfish and unprincipled voluptuary, without a spark of personal honour, without a spark of love for the country that bore with him so patiently. Oates, therefore, had wit enough to depict the Catholics as plotting a dreadful crime against the people. London was, he avowed, to be burned to the ground. According to Oates a sum of twenty thousand pounds was coming from abroad to assist the plotters. The King, himself, easily showed him to be untruthful before the Council. But where so many people desired to believe in him, disciples were easier obtained than driven away. And with the courage of one who knew how to impress the popular mind, Oates appealed, as it were, from King and statesmen to the public by actually swearing depositions as to the conspiracy before Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey.

On Saturday, the 12th of October 1678, Godfrey was missing. He was a wood merchant and lived in Green's Lane in the Strand, near Hungerford market. He had left home at nine a.m. Later he was seen in Marylebone. After that he was at St Martin's-in-the-Fields. That was the last seen of him. A hue-and-cry was raised. The Catholics were accused of being at the bottom of his disappearance. That he was, in fact, friendly to them, was of no consequence. No theory was too perverse to suit the party that had staked its fortunes on the crusade of which Oates was the apostle.

Day after day passed, still there was no sign of Godfrey. Nervous men were afraid of their own shadows lest the Jesuits should come to spirit them away. The knight's dark fate of yesterday might to-morrow be their own, or that of their kindred or friends. The Lord Mayor and Corporation might themselves share Godfrey's fate. And what was that fate? . . .

On the evening of the 17th of October a couple of men,

crossing a field at Primrose Hill, saw a sword-belt, a stick and a pair of gloves lying by a hedge.[1] Strangely enough they took no notice. By-and-by, however, they mentioned the matter. Investigation was made and—lo and behold!—in the ditch was found the body of the missing justice. The worst fears of the most timid were confirmed. Godfrey was a dead man, the victim of an unseen hand, a hand independent of time and space and opportunity, the hand of Oates's old-time friends, the terrible Jesuits!

His body was transfixed by his own sword. There was no blood on his clothes. His shoes were clean. His money was in his pocket, and a diamond ring had not been taken from him. But the neck and breast were bare. Around his throat was a broad, dark mark. It told a tale which deepened the mystery of the crime, and appalled the thousands of ignorant and credulous folk who swallowed, with avidity, all the lies that Oates could fabricate. Godfrey had been strangled.

At the inquest it was shown that he was dead before the sword pierced his body. He had been subjected to a slow and painful death, and the corpse had then been carried to the place where it was found, as though it were intended that highwaymen should bear the burden of the deed. But to exculpate the brigands there was money in the knight's pocket; and if that were not enough there was on his finger the diamond ring. So these diabolically clever Jesuits were not clever enough after all; as though the successors of Claude Duval would kill their man, and then send home to the family of the victim his valuables! Lest the public should hesitate as to the direction in which to look for the assassins, it was stated that spots of white wax were scattered over his clothes. And who could have anything to do with white wax save those who served at Catholic altars? It was all as plain as though the assassins had made public confession of their crime! So at least

[1] *The Romance of London*, by John Timbs.

said the commentators. The priests had done the work, and lest they should not be found out, lest Oates should show them mercy, they had thus taken good care to implicate themselves.

The murder of Godfrey, following on the stories told by Oates, was the one thing wanted to set London mad with apprehension of unimaginable horrors. The Tower was crammed with suspects. And even the King, ever a coward where his own comfort was served by cowardice, chose to treat the perjurer with some show of consideration, and a reward of five hundred pounds was offered for the discovery of the murderers.

A bid for this round sum was made by an oft-convicted felon named Bedloe. He had but recently left Newgate. But now he came forward and swore that Godfrey was murdered at Somerset House by the Queen's servants. Two Jesuits had, he said, done the deed by stifling the knight between pillows. He added " that he saw the body lying on the Queen's backstairs; that it lay there two days, that he was offered two thousand guineas to assist in removing it; and that at last it was removed on the Monday night by some of the Queen's people." A little later he revised his story. He said Godfrey had been inveigled into Somerset House and had been strangled with a linen cravat. This agreed better with the significant mark on the dead man's neck. But to atone for the loss of the silent, deadly pillows, he introduced a further addition to the effect that he had been tempted with four thousand guineas to commit the murder. Despite variations in the text, such unpurchasable virtue, vouched for by the one who could not be bought, was accepted at the valuation put upon it by its owner, and the wretch's oath was employed, with that of Oates, to send to their doom English priests and English gentlemen, innocent of wrong against any man.

It so happened that Charles had himself been in the Queen's apartments at the very hour when Godfrey was

said to have been lured there to meet his doom.[1] His guards were in the antechamber. But Bedloe had told a story which, if false, ought to be true. He and Oates were the hope of powerful politicians, who would not readily let so promising a tale die, and so knowing men put their heads together and said that, despite contradictions, smoke there never was without fire.

Bedloe could not be allowed to save the kingdom single-handed. This graduate of Newgate had to yield the stage once more to the heroic Oates.

The ex-student of St Omer's flew at the highest game. He accused the poor Queen of a design to poison the King.

"He probably thought," comments Evelyn, "to gratify some who would have been glad His Majesty should have married a fruitful lady."

Oates deposed on oath that "he saw a letter, in which it was affirmed by Wakeman, the Queen's Roman Catholic physician, that Her Majesty had been heard to give her assent to the murder of the King." Furthermore, Jesuits had thoughtfully left the door of the Queen's chamber open while he was in the antechamber, so that he might overhear all that passed. Bedloe came forward with his precious testimony in corroboration. Asked why he had not made mention of this design against the King earlier, he excused himself on the plea that the trifle had escaped his memory.

The unfortunate Queen now saw herself in peril of the block. During her career she had wholly eschewed politics. She had had nothing to do with the French bargain so disgraceful to the King. Her dearest hope had always been that Heaven would bless her with children that some scrap of affection and respect might be vouchsafed her. But the blessing of children was not for her. And year in, and year out, she was fated to see or hear of one woman or another reigning in the place that was hers

[1] Strickland's *Life of Catherine of Braganza.*

LUCY WALTERS

FROM MINIATURES AT MONTAGU HOUSE

of right. Then, at length, there came the resignation of indifference, and the only blessing she craved was peace to live her own simple, pious life apart from the rout at Whitehall, where the young gallants of the Restoration were now grey-headed men, and the beauties were no longer thoughtless, beaming girls, but sinners with lines upon their faces that told to the observant their own tale of infamy. But if the worst came Catherine knew how to die, and bravely she stood her ground, while no man dared to raise his voice in her defence save the King. Base though he was, he could not join in hounding his consort to death, and since he would not join in the hunt, he probably saved her. He would not permit any investigation of her conduct, or the mockery of a trial with witnesses who would swear anything.

Her servants, however, he either would not, or could not save. And three of them were executed for the death of Godfrey.

These men were but labourers. But Catholic noblemen were also charged with complicity in the plot, the execution of one of these, the venerable Lord Stafford, being one of the darkest blemishes on the memory of the King. Oates and a bevy of other informers, for the trade had rapidly become popular, swore the old man's life away, and Charles spared a little time from his cards and his wantons to sign his death-warrant.

While Justice had thus turned a very drab, while panic-stricken jurors, judges who knew not truth, and witnesses who could have deceived only the most ignorant, made the gallows drip with the blood of the innocent, Monmouth, to whose interest the plot was diverted, may well have seen in Titus Oates a new king-maker. The perjuries of Oates and of Bedloe had stirred up a storm of hostility that seemed to make the chances of James succeeding peacefully to the throne a very remote one. And the "Protestant Duke," as his friends loved to call Monmouth, now came forward, with effrontery

worthy of the son of Lucy Walters, to exhibit with all possible publicity his strange qualifications for the sceptre.

Monmouth's success in arousing popular feeling in his favour, as well as the more subtle efforts of his friends, obliged Charles to publish the following declaration:

"There being a false and malicious report spread abroad by some who neither friends to me or the Duke of Monmouth, as if I should have been either contracted or married to his mother; and though I am most confident that this idle story cannot have any effect in this age, yet I thought it my duty in relation to the succession of the Crown, and that future ages may not have any pretence to give disturbance upon that score or any other of this nature, to declare, as I do here declare, in the presence of Almighty God, that I never was married nor gave contract to any woman whatsoever, but to my wife, Queen Catherine, to whom I am now married."[1]

The story of the King's marriage to Lucy Walters, and of the documentary proof of it enclosed in the famous Black Box, and bequeathed by Bishop Cosin at his death to his son-in-law, Sir Gilbert Gerard, was revived, notwithstanding this Royal declaration. Sir Gilbert, however, declared before the Council that the Black Box was a myth, and the King repeated his declaration. But the lie was not to be easily killed. It was indeed to play its part in bringing him for whom it was fabricated to the scaffold.

Shaftesbury retorted on the King with a daring stroke. If Monmouth's mother had not been a married lady, neither was the Duke of York stainless in this topsy-turvy society, where all notions of right and wrong, of justice and of truth, had become hopelessly involved and perverted. The stigma of birth was answered

[1] George Roberts's *Life of Monmouth*.

with the stigma of Popery, and of the two the latter was the more injurious, as York promptly learned to his cost.

Shaftesbury denounced him to the Grand Jury of Middlesex as a Popish recusant, and Charles was obliged to banish him from the realm.

Then began the Exclusionist agitation to bar James from the succession. On his death-bed Bedloe had confessed himself a perjurer. Oates was discredited. But the fire they had kindled blazed now beyond the control of any man. The Exclusion Bill passed the Commons on the 11th of November 1680. Four days later it was received in the Lords.

The King appeared in the House to hear the debate. The Commons adjourned in a body to swell the audience. The leader for the measure was Shaftesbury. While the debate was at its height a young man rose and declared that the only way to protect the King's life from the malice of the Duke of York was to pass the Bill. The King was his father. The unfortunate Prince he thus rudely denounced was his uncle. This fierce young Exclusionist was he who stood to gain a throne. It was Monmouth, and he voted for the Bill. But he betrayed, without reward, the claims of blood. The Bill was rejected, and there came a day when he would have given all the gold, all the treasures of Europe, to recall that deed.

Defeated in the House of Lords the popular leaders fell back upon their power to stop supplies. The King should choose between money or his brother. Various expedients were proposed, one suggestion being that James, when his time should come, should have the title of King, but stripped of all real power. "To vote for such an expedient," said one member, "would be like letting a lion into the House to chain him, instead of fastening the door to keep him out." This simile was turned into a witty quatrain:

"I hear a lion in the lobby roar,
Say, Mr Speaker, shall we shut the door,
And keep it out?—or shall we let it in,
To try if we can turn him out again?"

The King, unable to obtain money at Westminster, prorogued Parliament, and got it from his old almoner, Louis XIV. But the country was appealed to in vain. The elections went against the Court, and the Exclusion Bill was again brought forward in the new Parliament in the spring of 1681. And the King, to save himself further trouble, once more dissolved Parliament, and what was of more importance, if he was to enjoy any peace, sent Shaftesbury to the Tower on a charge of treason. But the prince of firebrands was too powerful for the Court. The jurors threw out the Bill and Shaftesbury was once more free.

But England had grown too hot to hold him. There was no Parliament to stand between him and the anger of a King who, when sore pressed, would purchase peace with a death-warrant. Shaftesbury fled to Holland, and there the first statesman to discover in agitation the great weapon of modern politics passed away.

No statesman could perhaps have guided Monmouth to ultimate victory. But if any man could have done it, that man was Shaftesbury, and in his grave were buried the hopes of the unhappy man whose cause he had made his own. But Monmouth could not see that it was so. And so up and down the country he went, arousing everywhere the sympathy of simple people, always ready to fall in love with a handsome face, a gallant figure and winsome manners. But the sympathies of men who could but guide the plough and who handled the scythe better than the sword did not win kingdoms even in the seventeenth century. Monmouth learned this bitter truth in course of time. But meanwhile the King had for him, at least, illimitable patience. For him, at least, there was mercy without measure.

And what with his father's foolish patience, and mercy that was weakness, James of Monmouth found himself at last an outlaw, hidden away in a straggling old Tudor manor-house, with many a quaint hiding-place and many a half-forgotten vault. And the Lady of the Manor loved the fugitive from London.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE LADY OF THE MANOR OF TODDINGTON

THE Lady of the Manor of Toddington, in Bedfordshire, was a young lady of twenty-six, known through all the countryside as the greatest beauty in those parts. High rank was hers as well as charms that would have graced a throne, for the Lady Henrietta Wentworth was in her own right a peeress of England.

Henrietta was the daughter and heiress of Thomas, Baron Wentworth, and Earl of Cleveland, who served with the Cavaliers during the Civil War. After the disaster of Worcester he was captured and imprisoned, and, with many another loyal noble, returned at the Restoration to ancestral estates that, being heavily encumbered, were a source of honour rather than of profit.

In the neighbourhood of Toddington Manor stood the Bedfordshire seat of William, Lord Crofts, and he too returned home at the Restoration, and carried down with him to the country a boy with the face of an angel, who was afterwards to pass into history as the Duke of Monmouth. Little Henrietta was but a child, prattling at her father's knee. But she grew apace and soon could play a game with the girlish lad from Crofts's place, if he had but patience with the ways of a tiny damsel. But if the maid grew apace the boy did not stand still. When he was still little more than a child the elves that played in the shadows of the woods round Toddington found themselves robbed one day of the sport they made, and the sport they hoped to make with the lives of this bewitching pair who were too young to see beyond their pretty noses.

The boy, as we know, went up to Court, and his father

found him a wife without ever giving a thought to the Earl of Cleveland's little girl. Or if the King gave her a thought, it was only to reject her, for however lovely she might be, she had not the wealth for which those had so much use who would live at Whitehall. And so, because she had the misfortune to possess great wealth as well as rank, His Majesty chose little Anne Scott for his daughter-in-law.

But the elves of Toddington were not cheated altogether of their sport. It was only presented to them at another time, and so differently!

In time, too, Henrietta came to Court. Her father was now dead and Monmouth commanded the late Earl's regiment of guards. In all the lustre of his early manhood, the favourite of the King, and of all who loved the King, crowned too with laurels won in the wars raging in the Low Countries, Henrietta found the beautiful Prince entirely charming, entirely irresistible. Clothed in homespun he might have vanquished this country maid. But as he was, a polished courtier, a brave soldier, a rake of many adventures, a prize for whom so many great ladies contended, he completely enchanted the young baroness.

Henrietta was appointed to the suite of the second Duchess of York, then but newly arrived from her home in Modena. Many a heart beat the more swiftly for love of Henrietta. Amongst her admirers were the Earl of Faversham, and the young Duke of Shrewsbury, son of the victim of Buckingham's rapier. Lord Thanet, too, would make her mistress of his destiny. Any happiness that a girl might dream of was hers, did she but care to do battle with the evil star that strove for dominion over her.

It is said that the battle was lost on the night when Whitehall saw the masque of *Calisto* presented before the King and Queen and the Duke and Duchess of York. Henrietta played the principal part, and for one so young

to the licence of the Court a singular part it was. So singular that one wonders how the girl's mother could have permitted it. Monmouth danced in the masque. He was the hero of the night. Poor Anne Scott had never possessed much of her husband's heart. But it is thought that the one image graven henceforward upon it was that of the Lady of Toddington.

During the years that followed, nothing is known of the relations of the couple. Early in 1680 the Dowager Lady Sunderland, writing to her brother, Henry Sidney, at the Hague, informed him: "that the Duke of Monmouth has so little employment in State affairs that he has been at leisure to send two fine ladies out of town. My Lord Grey has carried his wife to Northumberland, and Lady Wentworth has hurried her daughter to the country in such haste that it makes a great noise."

Lady Henrietta's mother was too late in removing her daughter from the range of Monmouth's influence. For her there was never more to be any escape from his enchantment. A little later the Duke was once more in the neighbourhood where he had first seen the girl as a babe. But politics hindered temporarily the course of the intrigue, for events were steadily conspiring to press him into the chieftainship of a revolution. He was here and there all over the country, showing himself to the people, becoming intoxicated with their applause. At many an ancient grange he was a guest, where the gentlemen whispered of him as their future King, and the daughters paid him the devotion that a splendid gallant might expect in any case, but which was all the more lavish when the gallant was a King's son, who hoped to fill his father's shoes. While the agitation was at its height Henrietta must have experienced many a pang of jealousy. Anne Scott had never loved him. Go where he would she had nothing to lose. But on his capricious affections Lady Henrietta had staked all her happiness. The girl cannot have been ignorant that the man she

loved was sinner enough to be the hero of a dramatist of the day, even to the stain of blood. But the magic of love blinded her to the weakness, the worthlessness of his character. Perhaps, too, vanity sealed her eyes to the truth, and, in her dreams, she may have seen herself Queen of England when Monmouth should have come to his own.

On the 12th of June 1683 the discovery was made that partisans of the Duke of Monmouth had lain in wait at the Rye House Farm in Hertfordshire with the design of assassinating the King and the Duke of York on their return from Newmarket. The plot had happily miscarried, because the Royal brothers had left earlier than was expected, and Monmouth, instead of finding himself by one tragic and desperate blow a King, was reduced to outlawry.

The discovery of the plot was regarded as a fell disaster by Monmouth's friends. But that ill-wind which carried to the ears of the King dark tidings carried to Henrietta Wentworth her lover.

The soldiers were sent to his home to look for him. The King, it is said, had, however, given the Duchess the hint and the search was in vain. Next suspicion fell upon a house in Russell Street, Bloomsbury, where lived Eleanor Needham, the youngest daughter of Sir Robert Needham, a lady who had sacrificed her place at Court for a share in the Duke's affections. But Monmouth was soon far from London, safe in the home of the Wentworths.[1]

These were stirring days at Toddington. Every stranger descried in the distance might be a spy from London. Every horseman might be a messenger of evil. Every sound that disturbed the silence of the night might be the King's soldiers coming for the King's son to hurry him back to meet the Royal vengeance.

Information as to Monmouth's whereabouts soon

[1] George Roberts's *Life of Monmouth.*

reached Whitehall. The King had no desire to bring his son to the block. It was necessary, however, that he should disguise his tenderness for the arch-traitor. He therefore told Lord Bruce, son of the Earl of Ailesbury, to take a troop down to Toddington and arrest the fugitive. Bruce, however, was Monmouth's friend. He suspected, moreover, that the King's heart was not in his stern command, and that the way to please His Majesty was to disobey him. He excused himself on the plea that news of the coming of the soldiers would reach Toddington well ahead of them, and that with a thousand circumstances conspiring to secure his safety they would have marched in vain to arrest Monmouth.[1]

Meanwhile Monmouth scarcely took the trouble to conceal his identity from either the gentry or the people. Proof of this is forthcoming in a letter written by Lord Bruce, descriptive of a stag-hunt which took place at Ampthill, the family seat of the Ailesburys, which lay close to Toddington.

"One stag, I remember," he writes, "ran into my Lady Wentworth's park at Toddington, which never happened before, and swam the great pond. I was accidentally thrown out, and, in a lane beyond the park, I saw a tall man in a country habit opening a gate for me. I took no notice, but, casting my eye, perceived it was the Duke of Monmouth, who indiscreetly mingled with the crowd at the death of the stag very soon after. All those ceremonies practised by huntsmen last pretty long, and I grew impatient, fearing my father might come to know him, for he had been obliged to have seized him as being a Privy Councillor and Lord Lieutenant; to prevent which I kept him in continual discourse that he might not look about, insomuch that he told me that I had taken a large morning's draught. That lady, the mother, for the first time invited us to dinner, and not long after a second time, which she had never done before, in all

[1] A. Fea's *Life of Monmouth*.

appearance on purpose for a blind. To me, at least, she could not impose. It is a noble house. . . . But she would never permit us to see the apartments above. Not long after, a lady of my acquaintance that lived in a hamlet in the parish of Toddington . . . was invited to dinner by my Lady Wentworth, after church service, and that lady told me that the mother very unadvisedly carried her into her daughter's chamber, who was dressing herself, and saw a gentleman sitting in a great chair by the fireside, my lady, the daughter, with some warmth, reproaching her mother's indiscretion."

Bruce was, indeed, accused by Lady Henrietta's mother of having reported the whereabouts of Monmouth to the King. And she, herself, protested that she had never seen the Duke during all the time he lived there. At length, through the mediation of Halifax, Monmouth was enabled to make his peace with the King. The letter in which he craved pardon is as follows:

"If I could have writ to your Majesty sooner, with any safety to myself, I would have done it, to have told you that there is nothing has struck me so to the heart as to be put into a proclamation for an intention of murdering of you, sir, and the Duke. I do call God Almighty to witness, and I wish I may die this moment I am writing if ever it entered into my head, or I ever said the least thing to anybody that could make them think I could wish such a thing. I am sure there cannot be such villains upon earth to say I ever did. But I am so innocent to this point, that I will say no more of it; for I know God Almighty is just, and I do not doubt but He will put it into your heart, that I am clear of this most horrid and base accusation. But, sir, the chief intent of this letter is to beg pardon, both of you, sir, and the Duke, for the many things I have done that have made you both angry with me, but more especially of the Duke, though I might have some justification for myself, that many people made

me believe he intended to destroy me: for to you, I do protest, before God Almighty, and I wish I may never prosper more, that all I have done was only to save you, as I shall convince Your Majesty, if ever I am so happy as to speak to you; and I hope you will let me do it before it be long; for I have that to say to you, sir, that will for ever, I hope, settle you in quiet in your kingdom, and the Duke after you, whom I intend to serve to the uttermost of my power. And, sir, to convince him that I will do so, if Your Majesty will give me your pardon, I will deliver myself into his hands, that the Duke may bring me to you. Besides, sir, I should be glad to have him by when I speak to you, but nobody else; and by this kindness of the Duke's if ever I should do anything afterwards against him, I must be thought the ungratefullest man living. What good can it do you, sir, to take your own child's life away, that only erred and ventur'd his life to save yours? And besides, sir, I am sure I can be serviceable to you; and if I may say so make the rest of your life happy, or, at least, contribute a great deal towards it. You may believe me, sir, for I do not tell you this out of fear, but because I do think myself sure of it. I do beg of you, sir, if you have any thoughts of mercy of me, that you will let me know it soon, for the sooner I speak to you the better. And now, sir, I do swear to you, that from this time I will never displeasure you in anything; but the whole study of my life shall be to show you how truly penitent I am for having done it. And for the Duke, that he may have a more firm confidence of the service I intend to do him, I do here declare to Your Majesty, that I will never ask to see your face more if ever I do anything against him, which is the greatest curse I can lay upon myself.[1] MONMOUTH."

Monmouth was permitted to return secretly to Whitehall, where, with the assistance of a trusted few, he saw

[1] A. Fea's *Life of Monmouth*.

the King privately. Charles advised him to surrender. This he did, and though placed under formal arrest, he was, in fact, completely at liberty.

But James of Monmouth could not learn wisdom. Clemency was wasted upon him. So, too, was the loyalty of those who would raise him to the highest place. Equally unfitted to rule or to obey he stubbornly pursued the path to destruction. One morning the Duke of York inquired for him at his house at Moor Park, and was told by the Duchess that he was not there, that he had gone. Embarking at Greenwich on a fishing-boat he had crossed to Holland.

Love had played its part in this flight, and its part was perhaps more important than politics, for there appeared at Brussels, as the companion of the Duke, the young mistress of Toddington Manor.

Thus was concealment thrown to the winds. Faithless to wife and children as to King and kinsman; pitiless to the fatherless girl whom he had enslaved, his flight blazoned to the whole world the love-story of the Bedfordshire hamlet. Henceforward Anne Scott ceased to have any place in his life. In the splendid dreams that he dreamt for the future there can be no doubt that Henrietta, Baroness Wentworth, was Queen-consort of England.

CHAPTER XXIV

LORD GREY STEALS HIS SISTER-IN-LAW

THE example of Monmouth in bringing shame upon a noble and beautiful girl was paralleled under circumstances of still deeper infamy by his friend and lieutenant, Lord Grey.

In Westminster Hall, in November 1682, the scene of so many dramas of English life, the theatre of high tragedy in all its countless phases, crowds gathered to hear the story told of a peer's treason not against the King, but against his very own.

The prisoners were Robert Charnock, gentleman, living at Aldgate, and Anne his wife; David Jones, milliner of St Martins-in-the-Fields, and Frances his wife; Rebecca Jones, a widow of the same address; and last of all, but most important, the villain of the piece, Monmouth's boon companion, Lord Grey. And the charge against him was that of carrying off from her father's home Henrietta, daughter of the Earl of Berkeley. The summons of the court had commanded him to produce the girl. But though judges, counsel, prisoners and public were assembled, Henrietta was not there.

Then the drama moved on a little, and just as all were absorbed in the narration of a great man's treachery his luckless victim appeared.

Henrietta was at this time only a girl of seventeen.[1] Her father, the Earl of Berkeley, had been one of the commission who went to the Hague to invite Charles to return to his own. For his services to the Crown his reward was an Earldom. Lord Grey of Werk came a-woo-

[1] *The Romance of London.*

ing his eldest daughter Mary. All the qualities were his that could bring success in the England of his day. He was handsome, gay, accomplished. Mary Berkeley could not resist such a suitor, and she became his wife.

The Earl of Berkeley, when in London, lived at Berkeley House in Piccadilly, and his country place was the Durdans, near Epsom. At both these houses Grey, now one of the family, was made welcome, coming and going as he pleased, and delighting with his high spirits his young sister-in-law. As Monmouth advanced in years, and designing politicians chose to make him their hero, Grey enjoyed a share of the Duke's influence and popularity. He was right-hand man to the King's son. If the latter realised his ambitions, Grey's fortune would be proportionately splendid. At Berkeley House, and at the Durdans, they followed with keen interest the long course of intrigue destined to ruin York and establish Monmouth as heir-apparent. In the family circle the innermost secrets of the intriguers were doubtless hinted at if not openly discussed. To the girls of the household Grey was more than a man about town, a fellow of wit and of pleasure; he was also a soldier who some day, as no doubt it was often secretly whispered, might have to undertake desperate enterprises; a statesman who, if Fate were kind, might in time be called to rule a great kingdom as its Prime Minister. School-girls could not weigh this showy young nobleman in the balance and appraise him as worthless as the chief he professed to serve. They took him at his own heroic estimate of himself, and to one of their number the error meant irreparable ruin.

The husband of Mary Berkeley, received as a son in her father's home, conceived the dark scheme of diverting himself with Henrietta's affections. He could see the girl when he pleased. And before she could realise whither she was drifting she was betrayed. Henrietta was perhaps not more than fourteen or fifteen when she thus became her brother-in-law's victim, and for the next year

or two her life was one of continual deception with the ever-present risk of discovery. Lord Berkeley was hardly the man to take his daughter's dishonour lightly. His manners were of an earlier school than that of the Restoration; and Grey, in betraying his hospitality, courted swift tragedy, for which the father would have suffered no penalty at the hands of his peers.

At length, however, discovery did come. It was the unhappy mother whose eyes were first opened to the calamity which had fallen upon her home, a calamity which brought shame to one daughter, destroyed the happiness of another, and involved her whole family in disgrace.

One day the Countess found Henrietta writing in her own room. The circumstance would naturally have passed unnoticed but that the girl evinced some sign of embarrassment at being disturbed. In reply to a simple inquiry as to her occupation, she said she was going over her accounts, but her manifest confusion belied her words. Little dreaming of the terrible nature of the secret upon which she had stumbled, the mother, nevertheless, felt convinced that the girl was concealing something. The presence of a maid saved Henrietta from having her letter confiscated, and her duplicity and folly exposed almost before she could realise that the blow had fallen. But the Countess was so disturbed by the symptoms of deception she had witnessed that anxiety did not permit her to forget the incident. She spoke to her elder daughter Arabella, and told her to search her sister's room. But the search, up to a point, revealed nothing. There was, however, a cabinet of which Henrietta held the keys. That cabinet might tell something to the anxious mother of the mystery of her daughter's confusion.

Lady Berkeley demanded the keys. For Henrietta that demand was a call to judgment. Compared with it, it were a mercy had they convicted her without trial and opening the door thrust her out from her father's house to be swallowed up by the world. But the day of reckon-

ing had come, and to those who loved her, and because they loved her would know all, she should perforce deliver up her secret. The cabinet was opened. With trembling fingers they searched it through, and when they had done, the worst fears with which they had approached their task were tame when compared with the sickening horror of the whole truth. They found a letter which told all too plainly of the girl's weakness and folly, and of the cruel sacrifice that had been exacted from her by one who owed to her the chivalrous devotion of a brother; and to her family, loyalty and affection. The letter told Grey that no one had heard him the night before, and invited him to come again on Saturday or Monday. If the latter day, then the unhappy girl, who was ensnared by her sister's husband, would, she declared, be very impatient for his coming.[1]

With such a letter there was nothing to explain. No questions to ask. In the very nakedness of the discovery there was for the girl some mercy. A few lines written without reflection, and read by eyes for which they were never intended, and the whole world was changed, and mother and sister knew her for what she really was. For the first time perhaps, too, she now knew herself for what she really was. But the Earl's daughter endured her shame with composure. Grey had, indeed, done well the work of degradation. He had been a brilliant teacher of the philosophy of Whitehall, the philosophy that laughed at the notion that there was such a thing as sin, laughed at the ancient folly of virtue in woman or honour in man. Whatever the proud and beautiful girl said to her mother to assuage her grief, in her heart she still cherished the infatuation that had reduced them all to misery. On one point the women, innocent and guilty, were all agreed—the Earl should know nothing. Bad as was their plight they dreaded lest murder should be done. Above all, perhaps, they dreaded letting the whole world

[1] *Romance of London.*

know of the infamy which had overtaken the youngest daughter of the house.

Henrietta must have let Lord Grey know that their secret was no longer theirs alone. A maid, who had connived at the intrigue, was probably her messenger. In the midst of her distress, therefore, the Countess received a letter from Grey begging an interview. When he came Henrietta was present. And now, perhaps, for the first time, the wretched mother discerned the order of man that had been made free of her household. No saving touch of sorrow marked his manner. He was satisfied with himself and had not the grace to pretend otherwise. He made bold profession of his love for Henrietta, just as he had on a very different occasion declared his love for her daughter Mary. Following this cool confession of utterly selfish, utterly callous, libertinism, he adopted a bullying manner, and, with brazen effrontery, indicated to the wretched mother what she dared and what she dared not do. He threatened her that, if she exposed him, he would be revenged on the whole family, as if vengeance, the most ruthless, could inflict deadlier wrong or keener anguish than that of which he had already been the occasion as meet reward for kindness and lavish hospitality. Wrath might very well have dried the mother's tears and have fired her to utter such reproaches as would have sobered even so perverse and unfeeling a reprobate. But Lady Berkeley seems to have been cast in a mould too gentle for anger. Instead of reproaches, she met the traitor with petitions that the intrigue might end, that as far as possible he would see his victim no more.

She, in fact, forbade him the house except in so far as his absence might arouse the suspicions of Lord Berkeley and ruin them all.

But the Countess's efforts to arrest her daughter's descent were futile. Hence it was that Grey and his companions stood forward, in due course, as prisoners

at Westminster Hall to answer for the abduction of this mere slip of a girl.

While counsel for the prosecution was outlining the history of the scandal Henrietta Berkeley entered the court. Reckless of consequences, the Earl burst in on the procedure of the court with a personal demand that his child should be restored to him.[1] Once more, face to face with the daughter who had deceived him, the father's self-control deserted him. If only he could have possession of her and begone! But the shameful drama should proceed to the end, and she whom he had so tenderly cherished should be its pitiful heroine for whose folly angels would weep, as stubbornly she held on the way to bitter sorrow and ruin.

To Lord Berkeley's demand the Court was indulgently deaf. The law could have no regard for the emotions of a father half-crazy with grief. The judges might have ordered him out of Court. But they left him undisturbed and proceeded to hold the balance between the robber and the robbed, just as though a piece of gold had been stolen from the Earl's purse, instead of Berkeley House being plundered of a jewel whose fires illumined all the place, a jewel whose fires were extinguished never to be revived.

The crowded Court, it was soon apparent, was divided into two factions, the friends of Grey, and those for Berkeley. In the midst of the former the young Magdalen took her place, with face of brass, though her heart may have been less bold than her countenance. She heard her sister give evidence as to the discovery of the intrigue. Then the mother stepped forward and at her first word if a spark of honour, of manhood, survived in Grey he would have hung his head overcome by his own perfidy.

"I looked upon him as a son," said the Countess.

Then she went on to tell of her efforts to screen the

[1] *The Trial of Ford, Lord Grey.*

guilty pair from the father's wrath. She told of a secret interview with Grey when he confessed he was false and wept, and begged that his wife and father-in-law might be kept in ignorance as that otherwise he would become desperate. She promised that she would allow Henrietta to go about in public on condition that he, on his part, agreed to avoid her so that she might find it the easier to forget him.

"He said," proceeds the record of the Countess's evidence, "that he was going out of town with the Duke of Monmouth in a few days, and it would be strange if he went without coming to take leave.

"So that his wife or no one might suspect anything he asked permission to sup with us before his departure. And that he would write no letter or do anything to give offence. I gave him leave. He came at nine o'clock at night. . . . Next night his page came with a letter to me stating that the Duke of Monmouth was not ready to go from town yet and promising that his short delay in town need not worry me. . . .

"I wished to send Henrietta away," continued the mother, "but she begged me not, as it would not be safe for her to be away from me. I removed to the Durdans and Grey's wife joined us there. Grey wrote to his wife that he was going to his own house at Up Park in Sussex, and asking his wife to return to London. Lady Grey asked him in reply to call on his way to Sussex at the Durdans, in order to save her the journey to town. I wrote saying he could not make such a long journey in one day. That he might therefore call and dine at the Durdans, but was to say he had intended to sleep at Guilford. Instead of coming to dinner he called at nine o'clock at night. Coming in so late Lord Berkeley would think it strange if I turned him out. Therefore I was forced to let him stay. I charged him to have no conversation with Henrietta and to give her no letter, and he promised. He told me I might search him and see if

he had a letter, but I said I did not trust his coachman, Charnock, whom he had made a gentleman.

" He said he would go if I wished, but his wife begged him to stay. I told him after that night he should go. Next day he told me his wife was going to France, and I told him he was not to remain in England. I said, if he did not join his wife, I would tell Lord Berkeley all. He promised he would follow his wife and stay away eight months. That day he left the house, and after he left I spoke with Henrietta, who seemed sad, but promised never more to have anything to do with him. That same night, when all were asleep, she went. . . ."

This was Lady Berkeley's story. The mother had done all she could to save one daughter from public disgrace and to save the other pain. Cynical indifference to wrong-doing found no place in her character. Grey and Henrietta were true children of the Restoration, but the mother was an old-fashioned English lady, ready to quarter herself for the happiness of her children. It was on a Saturday night that the lady of the Durdans warned her son-in-law to leave her house next day, and he to reassure her said his wife was going to France, and that he would follow her thither.

Henrietta retired that night but not to sleep. When the last light was extinguished in the mansion, when father and mother and sisters slept, this damsel, inured to adventure by years of deception, stole from her chamber out into the night. Swiftly she left the Durdans behind, speeding away towards London. Lady Berkeley had schemed and schemed and lied, in vain, to save her daughter from the scandal to which, now, she hurried as fast as galloping steeds could carry her.

Her companions on the journey are thought to have been Charnock and a maid who had been an accomplice in the betrayal of her young mistress.

Next morning all was commotion at the Durdans. High and low they searched for Henrietta. In gallery

and chamber they called her name. Through the gardens and fields they hurried, hoping against hope that the air alone had tempted her forth; and while they tried to delude the father, and throw dust in the eyes of the servants, one of her sisters posted after Grey to Guilford, and, coming up with him, told him that which he already knew but too well. To lie was easy to him; and he denied all knowledge of the runaway. Then as the bereaved sister's face denoted her bitter disappointment, her despair, the misery in her eyes drew forth another lie. He generously added that if he saw her he would ask her to return, but would not force her. There followed a scene to melt a heart of stone, for the girl was too young to realize the utter futility of an appeal to her brother-in-law. But none the less she tried to storm his breast with tears and prayers.

"Let me," she cried, "come with you to find her . . . to find her before anyone shall know!"

She could not understand that the thing she most dreaded was to Grey half the charm of his sin. To her it was worse than death that all the world should know what Henrietta had done, that her name should be on the lips of every gossip, that, in the streets of London, and before village inns, ballad-singers should sing of her flight at dead of night to her paramour.

But while this scene was taking place at Guilford, Charnock, the gentleman's gentleman, was seen in London with a veiled lady who was afterwards identified as Henrietta.

It came out at the trial that Charnock had taken lodgings in London, and that a lady arrived there who never showed her face. A striped nightgown and a white and red petticoat attracted, however, the landlady's notice, and these sufficed to identify her lodger with the young lady from Epsom.[1]

Her next lodgings were with one David Jones, who

[1] *The Trial of Ford, Lord Grey.*

kept a milliner's shop at St Martin's-in-the-Fields. Grey came in disguise to see her at this place, but the milliner penetrated his lordship's efforts at concealment. London was now ringing with the scandal of the young girl's abduction, and the air of mystery with which Jones's young tenant surrounded herself, naturally, made servants as well as the head of the house inquisitive.

Still more embarrassing was the curiosity of a fellow-lodger. This was a Captain Fitzgerald, who doubtless knew, as all the town knew, of the girl's flight from home, and who, moved by his suspicions, inquired who was the veiled lady, and whether she was old or young. The servant told the captain that she was never allowed to see her. Fitzgerald was an officer of the Royal Household. He seems to have had little sympathy with Grey, perhaps because of his connection with Monmouth. It occurred to him that he had now stumbled upon the secret of this damned Whig, and that he would serve the King well to unearth it.

He spoke to Jones, who refused to be drawn. Then Fitzgerald blustered.

"I will go to the room," he said, "and see for myself."

Jones, deriving courage, no doubt, from his services to a great nobleman, dared the captain to be as good as his word. But when Fitzgerald, seizing his sword, made for the lady's chamber, Jones thought it discreet to temporise. It was late at night! The lady, Heaven help her! was doubtless fast asleep. Would the gallant captain disturb a gentlewoman and the whole household at such an hour, when he might satisfy his curiosity in the morning without any commotion! These arguments appealed to the captain's good sense and chivalry. He agreed to defer his investigations until the morning. But when morning came he repented of his generosity, for with the new day the lady was gone.

There was, however, a limit to Lord Berkeley's patience.

While his daughter was being hurried from lodging to lodging for the amusement of the town, he resolved that Grey should not have all the laugh on his side. He therefore took proceedings against him in the King's Bench for the production of his daughter.

When the jury had heard the evidence, and had withdrawn to consider their verdict, Lord Berkeley renewed his demand for the custody of his daughter. Henrietta, however, was dismayed at the notion of being surrendered to her parent, as perhaps she had good reason to be, for the Earl was little likely to risk another such abuse of liberty as had brought them to Westminster Hall. She declared she would not go with her father; that she was a married lady; and that her husband was in court. Poor Berkeley may well have wished that true it was, indeed, that his erring daughter had a husband. A Mr Turner stepped forward and claimed to be the happy man. Prosecuting counsel asserted that Turner was already married, for he was, apparently, a well-known person, his father being a leader at the Bar. Turner asserted that he had witnesses to prove the marriage, but Berkeley cut short the argument by repeating that he should have his daughter. The judges were divided on the subject. The Lord Chief Justice sided with the father. One of his learned brothers was for the lady. The Lord Chief Justice said the father might take his daughter and let the husband seek redress.

" I will go with my husband," cried the girl.

" Hussy, you shall go with me," exclaimed her father.

Then the lawyers began to argue as to what should be done with Grey. The Lord Chief Justice held that the writ in the suit was but till the lady's body had been produced. There she was before the eyes of all, and under no restraint, but with a lively tongue and a stubborn spirit that made her friends little the better that the writ had been obeyed. Eventually Grey was allowed bail. The Court was about to break up, and if Henrietta was allowed

to go those who loved her best might never see her again. There was now a pathetic struggle between the father, driven to desperation, and the wilful child.

"My lord, I desire I may have my daughter," repeated the unhappy Earl.

"My lord, we do not hinder you," was the Chief Justice's encouraging reply.

"I will go with my husband," repeated the girl, doggedly, as though she had been taught the lesson and feared to alter by a syllable the formula.

Berkeley was driven to the wall. At bottom he was a fighting man, and now he would carry the day with cold steel.

"All that are my friends," he cried, "seize her!"

Swords leaped from their scabbards. Down on the Grey faction descended the men for Berkeley and such a scuffle ensued as threatened to make Westminster Hall a shambles. The Lord Chief Justice was friendly to the father, but if this affair was to be adjusted with the sword it should be done in quick time. And the Berkeleys were not quick enough. The law ceased to be human after a minute or two, and the devilry was suppressed by order of the Court. For the time being nobody should have Henrietta for she was taken into custody to avoid bloodshed. That was the end of the Earl of Berkeley's hopes. At the close of the term she was released and went abroad. Berkeley House and the Durdans seem to have known her no more. Her life was henceforth in the hands of one who needed but time to make her curse the day she had hearkened to his blandishments. Like the other Henrietta who had linked her fate with Monmouth, she found an asylum abroad while awaiting the revolution that was to make Monmouth King and her paramour his right-hand man, redeeming her, as it were, by the splendour of her lover's uprise. But Destiny had not thus graciously planned an alleviation of her misfortunes. Not thus was written the story of the foolish virgins.

CHAPTER XXV

A DEATH-BED ROMANCE

"I pass all my hours in a shady old grove,
But I live not the day when I see not my love;
I survey every walk now my Phyllis is gone,
And I sigh when I think we were there all alone;
O then, 'tis O then, that I think there's no hell
Like loving, like loving, too well."

IN these lines, taken from a poem by Charles himself, the King sang of the only life he cared to live, a life of dalliance and of ease in beautiful places, carpeted with green, with one fair companion and then another to save him from his own thoughts, to warm the shady green bosom of the woodland.

In the heart of the enchanted grove nestled Whitehall. But without the region of enchantment Merrie England was a land to sadden angels and men. What with the King, and the King's eldest son, and the King's mistresses, the chiefs of the factions, and the men who were of no faction but simply lived to imitate their Royal master, England had touched the lowest depths of degradation to which a great people can be reduced by their leaders.

After the flight of Monmouth there was red work to be done, and the man who did it was one whose name is a byword for cruelty—the infamous Jeffreys.

The rise of Jeffreys is one of the romances of the City of London, so kind, so cruel to the stranger who comes to do battle for a share of the gold that paves her streets. His father sent him up from the country to St Paul's, there to pick up such learning as would fit him for trade, for his father's notion was that the boy should be apprenticed to a silk-mercer. But the school-boy saw the Lord

NELL GWYN

FROM THE PAINTING BY SIR PETER LELY IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Chancellor drive in state one day to be the Lord Mayor's guest, and young Jeffreys vowed that he too would be a lawyer and a judge. His father in his anger and disappointment prophesied that the highest place to which ambition would raise him would be the scaffold. But the father was wrong. The scaffold indeed played its grim part in his career, but only as the instrument of his advancement.

True to the traditions of City romance Jeffreys fell in love with the Lord Mayor's daughter. This lady, the widow of a Welsh gentleman, might have stepped out of the pages of Congreve. It was the age when citizens' wives and citizens' daughters were always depicted by the dramatist as deceiving the citizen, who, with thick head and loutish manners, invited dishonour at the hands of the coxcombs of the West. The amours of Jeffreys's bride were so flagrant as to make him a public laughing-stock. The marriage was, perhaps, the one thing needed to destroy whatever germs of tenderness lay hidden in the depths of his heart, for even in his own court prisoners dared to taunt him with his domestic misfortunes.

The records of the courts over which Jeffreys presided contain shocking proof of that callousness with regard to human suffering which seems to have grown more marked as the century advanced and open abandonment to vice became more pronounced. The women with whom he had to deal were generally of the most degraded class. But no touch of pity ever marked his treatment of them. Forsaken of God and man the lives of such creatures in Restoration London must have been a hell upon earth. Jeffreys having ordered a wretched culprit to be whipped at the cart's tail proceeded to revel in the anticipation of her tortures and humiliation. "Hangman," he said, "I charge you to pay particular attention to this lady! Scourge her soundly, man! Scourge her till the blood runs down! It is Christmas, a cold time for madam to strip in! See that you warm her shoulders thoroughly!" [1]

[1] Macaulay.

Amongst the political prisoners brought before him was Sir Thomas Armstrong. This man had been the companion of Charles's exile. But that was long ago. Kings have short memories. And now Armstrong, having been seized at Leyden with the connivance of a magistrate who was bribed, found himself on trial before Jeffreys. He claimed the benefit of an old statute which permitted an outlaw to purge himself of his outlawry by surrendering within a year. Jeffreys replied that the statute applied only to voluntary surrender.

"The statute is plain," replied the prisoner, stoutly.

"So plain," replied the judge, "that we can have no advantage from it. Captain Richardson," turning to the gaoler, "we shall have a rule for execution on Friday next."

Then from the body of the court came a woman's cry. It was in some sense the echo of a cry heard many a time under similar circumstances, a cry of exquisite and unconsidered pain.

"My lord," cried she, "I hope you will not murder my father. This is murdering a man."

The judge's malevolent eye was turned upon her.

"Take her into custody," was his reply.

Instantly he was obeyed, and as they carried her from the court the spectators heard an awful curse hurled at the tyrant's head.

"May God Almighty's vengeance light upon you," cried the desperate woman.

After this the prisoner might have best served his cause by keeping silence. But still he battled for his life.

"I ought to have the benefit of the law," he cried.

"You shall have it by the grace of God . . . on Friday next."

And the old cavalier, once a colonel of the King's Guards and an equerry, once a familiar friend to His Majesty, was hurried from the court to his doom.

A life or a death more or less, human fears and human suffering, had ceased to be of consequence. The infliction

of pain and the production of misery in all its infinite varieties were the concern of the victim and of those who loved him. The religion of Love was dead. Blood and pain and tears were nothing.

This was the man whom Charles made Lord Chief Justice of England. If a King and a nation be given the judges they deserve then were the deserts of England in the last quarter of the seventeenth century worthy of but a lowly place in the scale of civilization. Well may the unhappy gentlemen who fell into the hands of the law as a result of the intrigues of Monmouth's friends have prayed to be delivered from the hands of the Chief Justice. He was no respecter of persons. His tone towards the hapless drab was his tone towards all in his power. If from the bully you would have gentle words it was necessary to be his master.

During the winter of 1684 the land was stricken with a terrible frost. Money was scarce. Employment was meagre. Provisions there were next to none for the poor. The Thames was frozen over and streets of booths and shops were erected on the ice, which attracted a continual stream of sight-seers from near and far.

For seven weeks the frost lasted. Then came spring-time and an intensely hot summer. Charles received Jeffreys before the Chief Justice went on circuit, and taking a bloodstone ring from his own finger handed it to him as a token of gratitude for his services. He warned the judge to be careful of himself and " to beware of drinking too much."

Meanwhile a comparative calm had fallen upon the land. Agitation had been silenced by the executioner. Monmouth was in Holland with Henrietta Wentworth awaiting the call to his high destiny. His chief followers were dead or in exile. There was nothing to disturb the soft delights of " the shady grove " save the intrigues of politicians and the jealousies of the women who dwelt there. As for the politicians, the King was resolute in

his choice of York for a successor, resolute too in his dependence upon France; and Louis XIV. was master of Western Europe, thanks to the acquiescence of his cousin of England.

One Sunday evening towards the end of January 1685, a man advanced in years, of thoughtful, gracious mien, entered Whitehall. His pen was to trace in lines that would live forever the interior of the Court on this eventful evening, the King's last Sunday on earth. The visitor was John Evelyn.

"I can never forget," he wrote afterwards, "the inexpressible luxury and profaneness, gaming and all dissoluteness, and, as it were, total forgetfulness of God which I was witness of, the King a-sitting and toying with his concubines, Portsmouth, Cleveland, Mazarin, etc., a French boy singing love songs in that glorious gallery, whilst about twenty of the great courtiers and other dissolute persons are at basset round a large gallery table, a bank of at least two thousand pounds in gold before them. . . ."

Six days more and the boy would sing love songs to ears of stone!

On the 2nd February Charles rose from his bed pale and fatigued. He had slept but badly. He shivered. He was no longer young. Chiffinch, and Bruce, and Killigrew and other genial fellows were at hand to chase the spirits of gloom. They knew the things of which Charles loved to speak; his new house at Winchester now nearing completion; his dogs, of which a dozen slept in his room; his chemical experiments, for he loved to dabble in science; the play; the previous night's basset; what Nelly said; what Mazarin did. And if they knew how to please him, they knew, too, the things he would forget. From the red work Jeffreys was doing, from the gallant men chained in the Tower and other prisons throughout the land, from Cleveland's jealousy and bitterness, from Louise's intrigues, from the ingratitude of Monmouth and the designs of Orange, it was their duty to distract the King.

But the King was ashy pale. Time had been racing swiftly from him. Only the other day he was a boy, with limitless strength and appetite for pleasure. Now he was fifty-five and had lived every minute of his years. His blood was chilly. His heart weary. . . . Yes! He must be growing old.

While dressing the King fell down in a fit. Instantly the Court was thrown into commotion. Into the country the news flew on the wings of the wind. Within the memory of a great portion of the people England had been torn by Civil War. The sufferings of that time were burned indelibly upon their memories. And now all seemed very near again; for were there not, at least, three candidates for the Throne—York, and Orange, and Monmouth. And one might cite a fourth, a little boy, half-English, half-French, the son of Louise de Querouaille; but for him no sword would leap from its scabbard unless indeed Louis Quatorze should see in him a convenient instrument of French aggrandizement. No wonder the people flew to the churches praying for the King's recovery—praying for peace.

Their prayers were heard! The King was better! . . . It was, however, but the flash of the expiring flame that leaps with sickly brightness, a weird imitation of the full, steady blaze which is fed by the abounding fire of true vitality.

After a couple of days he had a relapse.

Bishops crowded to his room. So did statesmen and courtiers and courtesans.

A tall, bowed, swarthy man, bent with care and dissipation, was there. Who could he be but the unhappy York, saint, sinner, statesman, patriot and scapegoat, eager to do great things but capable of so little. His hour had come. Death was in his brother's face. Surely his persecutions were over and the crown of the realm within his grasp! From England they had twice banished him. At the moment banishment was again meditated for him. But Providence would not have it so. From

Whitehall an exile was indeed to go forth, but it should be none other than the King himself!

All whose birth or office entitled them to enter the palace swarmed to Whitehall. The people thronged round the gates, and no man dare turn them away. For centuries the Kings of England had lived more as great gentlemen amongst friends and kindred and dependants than as sacred persons, of flesh and blood apart, cut off by a measureless chasm from ordinary humanity. York may well have cursed that custom now, for a great secret weighed upon him, and something had to be done which even the light of day ought not to look upon.

By the laws of England it was death for a Roman Catholic priest to show himself in the palace, or even within the realm. And now a priest was wanted. . . . The King wanted him. It was indeed all he wanted from the land that had been so kind, so patient, so generous to him. And even in this thing, despite her faith and her laws, England did not fail this spoiled darling who had so abused her treasures and her love. . . .

There were priests in the palace, the Queen's priests. But they were foreigners. And this was the hour for an Englishman. And an Englishman heard the call.

It was York who sent for him. But it was Louise de Quérouaille who had begged York to contrive somehow to please the King in this his last desire.

James had managed to whisper into Charles's ear whether it was really true what Louise had said.

"With all my heart," answered Charles.

"Though it cost me my life I will bring Your Majesty a priest," was the brother's reply.

But promise was easy, fulfilment difficult. Everybody knew the foreign priests. To introduce them into the King's chamber might have caused bloodshed in the palace, a revolution in the town. It would almost for a certainty be death to the foreigners. Perhaps to the Queen. For these were times when men stopped not at

bloodshed to serve their ends. And if the flood-tide of the anger of an ignorant populace could assist their policy, statesmen were not apt to restrain it, but washing their hands were disposed to profit by it without compunction.

At length somebody thought of the famous Benedictine priest, Father Huddlestone. For his share in saving the life of Charles after Worcester he had been exempted from the penal laws. He might go where he willed through the land, and breathe freely, even in the palace itself, for he bore under his priestly robes a cavalier's heart of truest mettle. He had put his life in pledge for his loyalty, and his reward was not gold or titles or demesnes but that he alone amongst Englishmen might hold what faith he would, the prototype of the men of centuries to come.

Through the anxious groups of citizens Huddlestone made his way to Whitehall. They gossiped as he passed them by, for the Benedictine was disguised, and none guessed that in his bosom he carried the Holy Oils to administer Extreme Unction to Charles Stuart, and the Viaticum to fortify him for his journey. The romance was being enacted under their noses. But they did not know. They saw but did not see. A juster vision of it all was reserved for a later age, when long after Whitehall had been laid in ashes, imagination should raise up once more its walls, carpet its gardens with green and summer flowers, and its trees with summer foliage, marshal the citizens without the Holbein gates and the magnates within, and then conjuring up an absorbed, white-haired, venerable figure with bowed head, hurry him through the narrow streets, past the gossips at Charing Cross, and by a postern door admit him, an outlaw, yet no outlaw, into the palace, to the Royal apartments . . . to the backstairs, to a secret sliding panel . . . to the bedside of the dying King!

To the dying man, the sight of Huddlestone recalled the dark day long years before when the sun went down on Worcester and all seemed lost! Then he had been saved

by the gallant Pendrills and this Benedictine, saved for England because they loved him and their country, and thought that in serving him they served them well.

And here now was Huddlestone once again to help him at this other Worcester, to save him though he had failed England, though the years between were one long sad reproach wasted in the soft indolence of "the shady grove."

But there was no time for vain regrets. The law had made an exception of Huddlestone. He was not a felon. But the people were greater than Parliament, and if they but knew what was passing in the King's chamber who would answer for the consequences!

Quickly then was his task done. Charles told the Benedictine his sins. Pleasure had been the business of his life. Now it was his business to repent of it all. England had but his sins to remember him by. And now he was trying to blot them out, and for his desperate task only brief minutes were allotted to him. . . .

And Huddlestone pronounced the absolution. Then the penitent was anointed with the Holy Oil, and the Viaticum administered. The priest's work was done. He hid once more within his bosom the sacred vessels. Into the ear of the King he whispered his adieux, adieu this time forever. The sliding panel opened once more, and the Benedictine was gone, and unknown by all save a few trusted courtiers passed through the palace into the streets of London.

Almost the last words spoken by the King was a request to his brother "not to let Nelly starve."

Then the shadows deepened and deepened in the enchanted glades of "the shady grove," deepened until there was nothing but darkness. The wild flowers, the dense foliage withered into dust, into nothingness. The King was no longer a magician. The gates of the Paradise of Sense and Imagination were locked and barred and Charles Stuart was without them in the depths of eternity.

CHAPTER XXVI

"THE KING OF DORSETSHIRE"

FROM the deathbed at Whitehall no message of forgiveness was sent to the wayward son in Holland. The gods had failed him. A word from Charles might have almost decreed the exclusion of his brother from the throne. The word had not been spoken. And the only power that could ever raise him to the crown was gone forever.

There was left to him the woman he loved, the woman who had resigned her honour, her peace, her tenderest, worthiest hopes to share his fortunes. Her lover was vain and ambitious, a bad judge of men, prone to exaggerate his own talents. Very soon it must have dawned upon Lady Henrietta that this Duke was not the man to carry to success a forlorn hope. In Holland, in the Spanish Netherlands, they knew a man beside whom, as statesman or soldier, her lover was but a child, a man who knew how to wait while his enemies destroyed each other. The man was William of Orange.

Henrietta must have shared the Duke's despair on hearing of the death of the King. While he lived everything was possible, for he was her knight-errant's father. With his death the son of Lucy Walters was but an adventurer, who might capture what he would with his sword or by craft. But his was not the only sword, and as for craft, there were longer heads than his in pursuit of the same prize, and woe to him should he fail!

Monmouth seems to have felt his own weakness. Henrietta was beautiful! He may have thought at the

time that a prince in exile with so fair a companion was not, perhaps, much the poorer for wearing no crown! Gladly, perhaps, would he have laid aside his ambitions, or have been content to nurse them as dreams to lend enchantment to his love-story. But he had trifled so long with faction that now he could not draw back. They told him that England was waiting for him. The West, they said, loved him. The West would rise to a man! London would follow suit. Argyle would secure Scotland.

It was very alluring. Brussels, Antwerp, the Hague were pleasant. But Whitehall was the centre of the world. Henrietta's heart misgave her. But the girl who had fled from Toddington to brave public shame and continuous humiliations was not broken in spirit though her heart sank, and dark presentiments oppressed her soul. If Monmouth would go, let him go. She had chosen her path; she would live up to it. She would traverse it to the end.

"I am now so much in love with a retired life that I am never like to be fond of making a bustle in the world again," wrote the Duke at this time to one of his partisans. But the tempters would have him from his Arcadia. And early in the summer, accompanied by Lord Grey and Andrew Fletcher, he set sail from the Texel to conquer England.

To accomplish this mighty enterprise he had but a handful of men. Worse still, he had well-nigh empty coffers. About three thousand pounds had been raised on his own jewels, while Henrietta's and her mother's had provided rather a less sum. Altogether there was less than ten thousand pounds forthcoming to support the cause of this aspirant to a throne.

The next scene in this tragi-comedy was played on the Dorset coast, where, as the sun rose over the sea, a boatful of strangers were descried rowing ashore; while afar off on the horizon lay three mysterious craft with

never an ensign or pennant to give a hint of their allegiance.

Three persons landed from the boat and hurried away to raise the leader's friends. And then, a little later, the Duke landed with his merry men, and unfurling his banner of green and gold to the breeze marched into Lyme Regis.

The swains and lasses crowded round the miniature army, and the gallant commander-in-chief kissed one of the girls, as the only way he knew of pleasing all. Then war was formally proclaimed against James, Duke of York, the "usurper." Recruits were enrolled. Sword and pike and musket were served out to the levies, and that night the new King of Dorsetshire lay down to rest in the George Inn.

He had kissed a country girl. He had spoken grave words to the countrymen. But he had looked in vain for the coming of the great nobles and their tenantry. It was the nobles who could make or unmake him. And they were in no haste to the banner of green and gold.

Little wonder he sought his pillow with a secret pre sentiment of failure. His shipping lay at anchor a few leagues off. Stout arms would row him thither. A kindly wind would carry him back to the Texel, back to his beloved. Through the small casements the moan of the sea entered his low-ceilinged chamber, calling him from his massive oaken bed, with its faded silken hangings, to the home where his mistress's heart beat sadly for news of him. But the paralysis of the born fatalist was upon him. He could only go forward to his doom.

From the outset, this puerile bid for a throne had never a shadow of success. Grey was sent out with a party to occupy Bridport. The affair brought no honour to Grey. Monmouth heard with dismay that he had fled at the first exchange of shots.

"What shall I do with Lord Grey?" Monmouth is said to have asked one of his officers.

"You are the only general in Europe who would ask that question," was the reply.

But noblemen were too scarce in the camp for one to be spared as a target for a firing platoon. The next misfortune took place under his own eyes. Fletcher of Saltoun coolly demanded the horse of Dare, a goldsmith of Taunton, who, though no soldier, had too much spirit to brook such treatment tamely. The Englishman struck Fletcher with his cane. The Scot drew his pistol and shot him dead. After that the West country was no place for Fletcher. Monmouth should punish him or send him away. So the murderer was got aboard ship and returned to Holland.

Monmouth had lost precious time. His levies should have already learned their trade in the field of battle. But though the Royal army was now within striking distance the levies were still but raw recruits, strangers to steel and powder.

At Taunton, Monmouth tasted some of the sweets of Royal power. The people flocked to his standard. Every house was decorated in his honour. Every man's hat sported a sprig of green.

Persons in authority and the gentry generally held aloof or were actively hostile. Monmouth's army, numbering seven thousand men, attracted the rabble. All they knew was that this was the champion of their religion, that he was handsome and brave and princely to look upon, with a blithe word for all; and that his mother, poor Lucy, who had died a beggar in Paris, was a Western woman, and, as some said, the persecuted and sorely-wronged wife of a fickle Prince. What could these simple country folk know of the true balance of forces, of the audacious fraud of the Black Box, when not a man amongst them had, perhaps, ever seen London. And of news, none reached them from the outer world, save what was contained in the newsletter composed by some partisan pen for the local squire and disseminated

by some of his servants who could manage to spell through the contents when it had passed round the circle of the master's friends.

The end came at Sedgemoor, not far from Bridgewater. At eleven o'clock at night, on the 5th of July, Monmouth's peasantry, many of them armed simply with cudgels and scythes, marched out against the Royal army. The Earl of Faversham was in command of the King's troops. The Earl was brave but as a general he was little superior to the enemy. Grey with the cavalry reached the enemy's lines first. But though they should have known every inch of the ground the horsemen could not press home their attack. A stream barred their onset, and before the error could be retrieved they were under fire. Monmouth next appeared on the scene with the infantry. They began to blaze away in the darkness as though a desperate adventure could thus be carried through to victory. In the end the Royal troops instead of being attacked were the attackers. Monmouth was, up to a point, the equal of the simple fellows who left the fields and moors and hills to serve him. Throughout the hours of darkness he fought like a son of the West. But when day broke upon the field of blood, and he beheld his wretched followers hemmed in by the Royalist forces, his heart failed him. The first to turn his back upon the standard of green and gold was he to whom it meant everything. Grey was at his side as he fled from the field. He too had had his fill of campaigning.

Like his father, long years before, Monmouth was now a fugitive without a place to rest his head. A price of five thousand pounds was set upon him, and every road was scoured by pursuers eager for the blood-money. On the evening of the 7th of July Grey was taken, and the following day, half-dead with hunger and fatigue, seeking cover like some wild animal amidst the undergrowth of weeds and fern in the New Forest, the old-time darling of Whitehall was made a prisoner. Six days later he was lodged in the Tower.

His one hope of pardon lay in seeing the King. This boon was obtained for him through the Queen-Dowager. He was brought to Whitehall, and at Chiffinch's apartments his wish was gratified. There he saw the King. The life he treasured now hung upon his eloquence. But eloquence he had none to move the heart of his austere Sovereign. James loved his wife and children. Monmouth too had children. But James would not spare him for Henrietta's sake, nor to save his children from being fatherless.

"Remember," cried the unhappy rebel, "I am the son of your brother. It is your own blood you would shed."

But James was dumb, and back he went by the river to the Tower without a word of mercy to illumine with hope his prison.

Monmouth, however, would not yield up sweet life without a struggle. To the Queen he wrote a letter that might have melted a heart of stone, begging her to intercede with her husband. But if the Queen heard his prayer for forgiveness, if she begged her consort to extend to him the mercy he implored, she begged in vain. There was no pity at Whitehall. Charles had let Stafford and all the other innocent men die, and they called him "good-natured." Nobody so described James. He was hard and Monmouth was guilty.

When the unhappy prisoner had abandoned all hope something of Royal spirit, something of Royal dignity sustained him. His deeply-wronged Duchess came to say farewell. They had never loved each other. As she looked upon him the vision of Henrietta Wentworth must have risen at his side. But they both loved their children, and Henrietta would never again win him from his true allegiance, so that, remembering what was so near, Anne Scott could be gentle with this sinner who no more would tax her kindness. He begged forgiveness because she had given him his precious children. She could for-

give him because he left behind to her so much that made life inexpressibly sweet.

One short week after they had torn him from his forest-lair he was led out to die.

The scaffold on Tower Hill was draped in black. Cavalry and infantry kept the ground. Bishops attended to pray with him. The crowd around craned their ears for a confession. But what had he to confess that they did not know? Had the scythe-men won at Sedgemoor, it might be that these same bishops would have set the crown upon his head in the Abbey yonder, these same people would have cheered and cheered him till their voices failed. He had played for a great stake and had lost. That was all.

The Bishops alternately prayed and plied him with questions. But Monmouth hardly heard them. His thoughts were divided between the axe gleaming like silver against the background of mourning, and the lovely woman in a distant land whose eyes he would no more behold. With his dying breath he tried to clear her memory. It was a vain, a foolish effort, worthy of one who was ever a fool. He played into the hands of his enemies and the enemies of the girl he loved. One of the sheriffs cut him short with the question whether he was married to the Lady Henrietta. Monmouth had but taken his idol's name in vain. There was no reply. With the fortitude of a saint the prince of Restoration rakes, the darling of the belles of Whitehall, the friend of Mad Ogle, the chief of Coventry's mutilators, the murderer of old Verinell laid his head on the block, quietly confident that his blood would wash away his crimes and that the mercy he sought in vain here would be extended to him in the world beyond.

The axe fell again and again. But if the edge was keen, the fellow's arm was feeble. His spirit was not in his work and his blows only wounded the Royal victim. Monmouth raised his mutilated head and looked reproach-

fully at the headsman but said nothing. The executioner's heart failed him. He threw down his axe and vowed he could not finish his task. But the threats of the Sheriff, and fear too doubtless of the vengeance of the mob, made him resume his work; but the head did not fall from the body until it had been severed with a knife.

Meanwhile Henrietta had sent to England to inquire as to her lover's fate. And a little later, unable to endure the tortures of anxiety, she, herself, returned to England, returned to hear the story of the inglorious downfall of the standard upon which she had founded splendid hopes, and the death of him whom she had encouraged to unfurl it to the English breeze.

The news of such swift and overwhelming calamity broke the unhappy lady's heart, and she retired to her lovely home in the country to die. In July 1685 Monmouth had perished on the scaffold. In April 1686 Henrietta passed away at Toddington. At her obsequies the bell-rope was cut by one who should have been her friend, lest the bell should pay its sorrowful toll to the memory of the young lady of the manor. The common people were kinder to the young wanderer's memory, gentler to her sins. They had always loved her, and loved her better than ever in her misfortunes; and at her graveside they were true mourners.

CHAPTER XXVII

BONDMAN AND FREEDMAN OF THE WEST COUNTRY

IF blood could make a throne secure that of King James would have been founded on a rock. Not only did the chief of the rising die, but death and ruin and misery were meted out unsparingly by His Majesty's officers. The West had sinned against its King and generations would pass before the penalty of its transgressions should be forgotten in the stricken region.

The gibbet, crushing fines, imprisonment without trial were familiar aspects of the life of the period. But not only was life held cheaply, and truth so cheap that any evidence was good enough to excuse a hostile verdict, but, worse still, liberty was merchandise, and in the closing quarter of the seventeenth century Englishmen might be bought and sold to work like beasts of burden in slavery.

Of those taken prisoner by the Royal army after the disaster of Sedgemoor there was one, a man of education and of spirit, whose punishment consisted in being reduced to slavery, and whose relation of his sufferings and adventures in the West Indies remains to link the life of the British slave of the Stuart epoch with the land of which he was by birth a citizen.

Henry Pitman, a surgeon returning home from Italy, went down into Somersetshire to visit his kindred. Hardly had he arrived at Sandford, his native place, than news arrived that the Duke had come to raise the West, and, moved by curiosity rather than any devotion to the cause of the invader, Pitman rode off to Taunton to see the mustering of Monmouth's army, and still more to see the

young man who had come to take possession of the realm.

Having satisfied his curiosity the surgeon would return home. But the roads were no longer open. Wedged between the two opposing armies he threw in his lot with the King's son, not, however, as a combatant but merely as a doctor moved by compassion to employ his skill to succour his wounded countrymen in whose camp he found himself more by accident than design.

Dressing the wounded by night and marching by day the surgeon at length came to Sedgemoor. That was the end of the campaign and the end of his service. He turned once more towards Sandford. But the Royal troops in hot pursuit could not distinguish the surgeon from the routed soldier. Pitman was made prisoner, his pockets rifled, his coat stripped from his back, and thus beggared and half-clad he was committed to Ilchester gaol.[1]

There, with many more prisoners of war, he lay until the Assizes, persons visiting them meanwhile to extort confessions, without which it would have been difficult to present any case whatever against most of them. According to Pitman's narrative these investigators promised life and mercy to those who would make full confession of their share in the rebellion and all they knew of it, assuring them that only those who had served as officers or had been guilty of capital offences need fear the supreme punishment.

The confessions thus extorted were employed at the Assizes to induce the Grand Jury to return "true bills." But the petty jury could return a verdict only on the evidence heard in Court. The terrible Lord Chief Justice was not to be baffled by so obvious a difficulty. A handful of the prisoners were first put upon trial, being carefully selected as men against whom evidence could be

[1] *A Relation of the Great Sufferings and Strange Adventures of Henry Pitman*, 1689.

JAMES, DUKE OF MONMOUTH

FROM A PAINTING AT VERSAILLES

produced. They were found "guilty" and the very same afternoon were sent to their eternal account.

The fate that had so expeditiously overtaken these men affrighted their companions. Trusting in promises of clemency most of them pleaded "guilty." And then they learned what the Chief Justice's promises were worth. They were all condemned "to be hanged, drawn and quartered," including the unfortunate doctor, whose only crime was that he had salved the wounds of many of the King's men as well as those of the Duke.

Hundreds were actually executed but the surgeon was not of the number. Those whose lives were spared were ordered to be transported to the West Indies.

This order for transportation seems to have reduced, in the eyes of the law, those upon whom it was passed to the level of the brute creation. England should be rid of them, but how that riddance was to be effected was apparently not the concern of the State. In this case the convicts were seemingly handed over as a free gift to one individual. It was for him a noble, a profitable herd. He put his brethren upon the market and a buyer came forward in the person of George Penne, the brother of a West Indian planter; and for service in the sugar-fields of the distant isles in the Caribbean Sea the lusty Westerns who had so foolishly gone a-soldiering were purchased by their countryman.

But even in this infamous traffic there were unexpected byways of corruption. Penne struck a bargain with Pitman's relatives that, for payment of a round sum, he should escape the worst rigours of slavery by being consigned to one who should be to him but a nominal master.

The wretched slaves were taken from their prison to Weymouth, where a vessel from the Thames awaited them to convey them to the plantations. Some were, however, never destined to enter the land of bondage. The voyage across the Atlantic occupied five weeks.

Pitman records that they had a "very sickly passage." Nine of his companions were redeemed from slavery by Death, and while kith and kin in the old land hoped and prayed for their deliverance, deliverance came to them in the waters of the ocean.

The General Assembly of Barbadoes was convened immediately after the arrival of the vessel from Weymouth, and an Act was passed which gave absolute power over the exiles to their masters for the space of ten years, which seems to have been a common period of banishment. For a master to release a slave the punishment was a fine of two hundred pounds, a year's imprisonment, and the loss of civil rights.

Any attempt on the part of the unfortunate convict to regain his liberty was, in the event of failure, attended with frightful consequences. He was taken to the nearest market-town and there publicly flogged, receiving thirty-nine lashes on the bare body. On yet another day he was set in the pillory. And finally, that all men might ever recognise in him one who had made a bid for liberty, the letters "F. T." were branded on his forehead, signifying "Fugitive Traitor."

Pitman had hardly landed when he found that the bargain made in his favour by his relatives was to avail him nothing. Far from being allowed to evade the usual misfortunes of his lot by choosing for himself a titular master, he was given to a planter named Bishop. The unfortunate outcast had not even the comfort of knowing that his enemies had broken their bond, and that, if he should suffer, the friends who had made sacrifices to help him might make a fight for the recovery of their money. For the bond was only broken in spirit. Adepts in knavery they knew how to observe the letter, and so Pitman was told he would be allowed to change his place if he disliked his master. And dislike Bishop he soon did and begged for a change, but he might have spared his petitions. He had been sold, body and soul, and this

Englishman, the victim of Englishmen, and of Christians as the century understood the term, was in plight as grievous as though he had fallen into the hands of the Moors and that the Koran was his master's guide.

His diet was salt beef or salt fish and maize ground and made into dumplings. The surgeon, unaccustomed to such fare, suffered in health and begged for flour that he might make bread for himself instead of dumplings. But Bishop had no pity for a man of education broken in health and fortune. He threatened that he should fare worse instead of better. But Pitman's spirit was not one for servitude. He retorted angrily and Bishop, beside himself with rage, flew at him with his cane and rained blows upon him until he had split it in pieces.

For fifteen months Pitman suffered the indignities and tortures that were heaped upon him, and which were softened only by the pity of his mistress, who once released him from the stocks after he had been confined in them for twelve hours under a blazing sun.

Fifteen months passed and the unhappy exile, weary of bondage, resolved to make a bold attempt to regain his liberty, even at the risk of recapture with the inevitable torture of the lash and the branding-iron. Moreover, his brother, who hitherto had been the companion of his sufferings, had died, the only link that might have served to curb his daring spirit and wed him to his misery being thus severed.

The same devious fate that had reduced him to servitude now favoured his design. His friends in Somersetshire had not forgotten him, and money having, through them, come into his hands he bribed a confederate to purchase a boat. Every night the slave and his ally met by the seashore to mature their plans. Food and instruments of navigation were collected for their voyage and were stored in a secret place ready for hurried embarkation when the hour of action should come. And the hour came when kindly Fate filled the whole island

with carnival because the governor of a neighbouring place had deigned to come amongst them. The militia were called to arms in honour of the great man, but the militiamen in arms were less dangerous than when peacefully pursuing their ordinary tasks, for the order of their martial exercises consisted of drinking and feasting and revelling, followed by deep sleep under the guardianship of drowsy sentinels.

As midnight approached a little group of desperate men went down from Barbadoes to the sands of the Caribbean Sea. Theirs was a desperate errand. The wide ocean lay before them, softly inviting them to liberty or death; and how could Englishmen resist the call though they well knew they might be captured and brought back to the red-hot iron and the scourge!

Not without alarm was the boat launched and provisioned. At the last moment the watch appeared on the scene. But the night was either very dark or the watch was very drowsy, for they saw nothing of the tiny boat lying ready to put to sea, with everything shipped for a full crew and a long voyage. And so the danger passed, and though in the first depression of their fright they thought of abandoning their adventure, they quickly recovered their spirits and embarking put off on their forlorn hope. By daylight they were clear of the fortifications and far out at sea, but to temper their joy their boat was leaking so badly that hard baling with a tub was necessary to keep their crazy craft afloat. They endeavoured to stop the gaping seams with their linen, saturated with the tallow of bruised candles. But it was impossible to make her water-tight, and so they laboured along through a heavy sea, baling continually day and night though some of them were so sick that they would have welcomed destruction.

Curaçao was the port for which they steered, and the little company, having recovered from sea-sickness and cheered with hopes of freedom, set about putting things

in the best trim possible for a voyage of indefinite duration. They lashed up oars, and to these nailed tarpaulins in such fashion that a bulwark was raised some nine inches above the sides of the boat, which did good service in keeping out the sea. An awning was likewise erected to protect them from the scorching heat of the sun.

Having very nearly been wrecked off the island of Margarita they directed a course for Saltatudos, and there, when they had been a week at sea, a dreadful storm overtook them, churning the sea to foam that swayed round them in mountains and vales. At every moment the billows seemed ready to swallow them up, and the adventurers, awed by the fury of gale and raging ocean, repented that they had ever set out on so foolhardy an enterprise. In their terror they appealed to Heaven, and sure enough their petition was heard. The winds were subdued, the waters calmed, and they were able to steer for a small island in the neighbourhood.[1]

Here they fancied for a moment that they had delivered themselves into the hands of cannibals. But the supposed cannibals were Englishmen, castaways from a privateer that had gaily come to the West to plunder the Spanish settlements. Their skipper had put them ashore to obtain necessaries for him of one sort and another, and they never saw their ship or their skipper again.

Their new companions were nothing better than pirates, and though Pitman could not choose his society in his present circumstances he declined to accompany them in their small boats when, having fitted these up, they spread their sails to scour the main for Spanish prizes.

Left to themselves these Somerset Crusoes adapted themselves as best they could to their novel environment. They walked to and fro along the beach in the night-time to turn on their backs the turtle that had come ashore to lay their eggs and which, incapable of turning themselves again, could thus be left without risk of loss until

[1] *Pitman's Relation.*

the day-time, when they killed and roasted them, or salted and dried them in the sun in preparation for the winter and scarcity. Turtle, tortoises, eggs and wild-fowl supplied their table, while Pitman succeeded in distilling a spirit and concocting medicinal stuffs from the vegetable products of the rocks. From the leaves they obtained thread to mend their tattered rags. Their boots were soon worn out, but gradually the soles of their feet became so hard that they did not feel any discomfort from their loss. While, to soothe their leisure hours, they smoked a fragrant herb which made a pleasant substitute for tobacco, a crab's claw supplying the place of a meerschaum.[1]

When they had been leading this Crusoe-like life for three months they sighted one day a sail upon the distant horizon. Larger and larger it grew, and as the distance lessened they beheld a man-of-war standing inshore. The stranger lowered a boat and the castaways awaited its coming with hope and fear at war within their breasts—hope that the visitors might prove to be English, fear lest they should prove to be Spaniards who, with many a heavy score to settle, would probably regard them as privateers and carry them into captivity beside which their lives in Barbadoes would appear the lives of freemen.

While these doubts agitated them the boat arrived within hailing distance of the shore, and a voice that set all their anxieties at rest came muffled across the waters:

"Which is the Doctor?"

The voice told the castaways that it was Englishmen who had found them out. The demand explained their errand. The warship had learned from the privateers, who had put to sea after a vain attempt to enlist Pitman under their flag, that a doctor was a castaway on one of the islands, and his skill in these desolate regions was often in its way as precious as the gold of the Spanish main. Hence they had come to impress him into their service and

[1] The author of *Robinson Crusoe* is thought to have been familiar with Pitman's narrative.

purchase in return for his release the advantage of his care and learning.

He begged that they might take his comrades also. But they would not. The best they could do for them was to cheer their desolation with good things, which they could spare without much discomfort to themselves for they had just plundered a great Spanish prize, and were making for port to sell their booty and spend their money. Pitman's friends were entertained aboard; and then before finally taking their departure the privateers sent ashore to them a cask of wine, some bread and cheese, a gammon of bacon, some lengths of linen, and needles and thread. Then setting sail they left them to their turtle steaks and the solace of their crab's-claw pipes. Later succour came to them too, but for the time being their loneliness deepened into something akin to despair as they saw their head man, their wise man, their medicine man, disappear from their unknown world, wafted by the winds to the civilization for which they yearned.

Having thus quitted his friends Pitman found himself in a little while at the Bahamas, and then they steered north to where the little town then nestled amidst virgin plains, in the shadow of mysterious mountains, which now is one of the first amongst the great cities of the world. After various vicissitudes New Amsterdam had passed finally in 1673 from the hands of the Dutch into those of the English, and Charles II. had renamed it, in honour of his brother, New York.

There the unhappy exile who had so boldly recovered his freedom now found himself. But the free air of the infant settlement could not satisfy the longing of his heart. He would be back in England. His heart was in the West country.

England was to him the land of sorrow. There they had forged his chains. What had been done once that they might do again. But none the less trusting that a disguise would enable him to evade recapture and its

consequences he embarked in a vessel bound for home.

It was in June 1689 that he beheld once more the beloved shores whither Jeffreys had banished him. Treading once more his native land he turned in disguise to cross the country to where his kindred had begun to mourn him as one dead. But disguise was unnecessary. He might if he so pleased let all men know that he had borne the yoke and stood in the stocks, that he had risked the red-hot branding iron and the biting lash, and braved the perils of the deep to breathe once more the air of England.

The same Fate that had obliged him to cast in his lot with Monmouth's army, and had reduced him to the lowest depths of misery, the same Fate that had later smiled upon his gallant dash for freedom, subduing the storm and curbing the fury of raging seas and piloting his little craft through countless hazards to the safety of an almost hospitable shore, had wrought in England a Revolution. The castaway had come back to his own. And the King, his enemy, had gone.

This summer of 1689 everything was changed. But written over the face of the West country there was nothing to tell this wanderer of the great events that had befallen the motherland while painfully he was struggling back to her from the place of his bondage. Rulers come and go, statesmen rise and fall, but the plough and the ploughman, the farm and the farmer, field and flower and woodland are ever the same. And so the long strange story had to be told by the hearth to the freedman of how Monarch and slave had in some sense changed places, of how the House of Stuart had been cast down, while a stranger had come from afar off and in the ancient home of the English Kings set up his throne.

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